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New York

Co-Chairperson: El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba ..... (President of the Gabonese Republic)
Co-Chairperson: Mr. Göran Persson ..... (Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sweden)

The meeting was called to order at 9.05 a.m.

Addresses on the occasion of the High-level Plenary Meeting (*continued*)

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): Before giving the floor to the first speaker for this meeting, I would like to remind members once again that statements should be limited to five minutes.

The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Ismail Omar Guelleh, President of the Republic of Djibouti.

President Guelleh (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me, on behalf of my Government and the people of Djibouti, to express our profound sympathy and sadness to the Government and people of the United States on the terrible and devastating tragedy and despair resulting from Hurricane Katrina along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico. The speed with which that tragedy occurred, as well as its serious consequences, have shocked and unsettled us all.

Allow me to congratulate the Co-Chairpersons on their joint election to preside over this summit, which constitutes the Organization's largest such gathering since its establishment 60 years ago. Their joint chairmanship reflects the importance of the effort we have undertaken together. What we achieve, or fail to achieve, at this summit will no doubt have a profound impact on humankind.

I would be remiss in my duties if I did not pay tribute to the leadership, vision and determination of the Secretary-General in motivating and encouraging us to enact a series of reforms to ensure that the Organization remains relevant for future generations. He has carried out his share of the responsibility in that regard.

Our Meeting should not be limited solely to providing mere political support. Instead, we should endeavour to bring about major, long-awaited changes. Any failure would be a reflection of collective impotence and our lack of willingness to accept those crucial changes.

Lastly, allow me to express our thanks to the outgoing President, Mr. Jean Ping, for his selflessness, determination and integrity. He has been able to secure everyone's trust with grace, modesty, flexibility and open-mindedness.

This summit has not been easy to organize. This is not a single event but, rather, the outcome of audacious collective efforts launched at the Millennium Summit, in 2000, thereby underscoring the major development issues of our generation, highlighting our common future and, lastly, illustrating our refusal to accept widespread poverty at this stage in our history.

The Millennium Declaration, which we adopted in 2000, committed our countries to a global partnership to reduce poverty, improve health and promote peace, human rights and gender equality, as

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well as to ensure the sustainability of our environment. The Declaration also reaffirmed our faith in the Organization, our commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and our respect for international law, so as to maintain international peace and security.

Since 2000, the world has experienced many crises and witnessed many terrible instances of anger, sadness and revulsion. It has also experienced wars, global political and economic turmoil and, lastly, a disturbing decline in international peace, understanding and cooperation. Regrettably, the central role of the United Nations in ensuring collective responses to global problems has suffered, while its effectiveness and relevance have come into question. The imminent collapse of the United Nations has therefore become the subject of intense speculation. Faced with that alarming prospect, the Secretary-General has, with great insight and determination, initiated a thorough review of the United Nations system and has put forth a series of vital reform proposals.

In his report entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005), the Secretary-General urged Member States to use this summit to strengthen the world's system of collective security, to forge a genuinely global and multisectoral strategy for development and to intensify efforts to secure democracy and human rights for all peoples.

A changing world needs a changing United Nations system that is adaptable and prepared to provide collective responses, that is working towards eradicating poverty and promoting sustainable development, that advances human rights, promotes democracy and strengthens good governance, that is working to combat terrorism and that is equipped with the necessary technical and managerial expertise and resources to effectively perform its duties at all levels.

The past decade witnessed the holding of major conferences and summits in the economic and social fields that charted the outline of a comprehensive vision of development and identified agreed collective goals aimed at improving the lives of the world's people. We fully appreciate the praiseworthy efforts made to ensure full and swift implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, including those embodied in the Monterrey Consensus, which have given rise to unprecedented gatherings aimed at helping the most disadvantaged peoples to overcome poverty.

Many developing countries have special needs and challenges that must be addressed through the full, timely and effective achievement of the goals and targets adopted at major conferences, such as the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries. Unfortunately, most of the least developed countries are located in Africa, and they also have special needs. Africa remains the only continent not on track to meet any of the goals of the Millennium Declaration by 2015. It requires urgent priority assistance in all areas, including integration in the international trading system. Indeed, through the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), our continent has been able to meet challenges and take advantage of opportunities. Strengthening cooperation in the context of NEPAD is therefore imperative.

During the preparatory process leading up to this summit, it became all too obvious that many promises and commitments made and targets set in the past were not going to be met and that millions of men and women would continue to suffer from hunger, squalid conditions and grinding poverty. But what makes 2005 somewhat special is the growing recognition among most of the developed countries that implementation of the global development agenda has been very slow, unpredictable and uneven. Greater leadership, determination and consistency are sine qua non conditions for achieving our development goals.

In that connection, more donors must take the necessary legislative steps at the national level. Official development assistance should not be aimed solely at addressing the consequences of poverty but should be targeted instead at creating conditions in which private investment can flourish. The ultimate goal is self-sustainability. We hope that the World Trade Organization round of negotiations will be satisfactorily completed by 2006. With the expected positive outcome of this summit with respect to allocating more resources for combating the growing devastation of HIV/AIDS; the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women; the diversification of agricultural commodities; the increasing availability of the benefits of science and technology; and improved health-care systems in developing countries, we will surely be on the path to economic growth and renewal.

The Millennium Development Goals are too important, therefore, for us to fail to meet them. It is not enough to initiate strategies to accelerate progress towards the Goals; what we need are strategies to achieve them. In recent years, many leaders have rightly stressed the interlinkage between poverty reduction and global security. To that end, we must mobilize international efforts to end violent conflict, instability and terrorism. Poverty increases the risks of instability in a variety of ways. We must effectively address global insecurity. The fact is that wars, internal conflicts, terrorism and other evidence of profound instability demand that we succeed in our fight against poverty.

Since its independence, my country, as a matter of principle and as a major policy objective, has pursued and supported the achievement of an inclusive, egalitarian society, ensuring in particular equal opportunity for boys and girls and primary education for all. We have made major investments in education to ensure that all children — boys and girls — receive free, high-quality basic schooling up to the secondary and university levels. Considering our meagre resources, this undertaking is for us a mammoth challenge given our growing population.

Many issues have been the subject of intense, often contentious negotiations among Member States. This is evidence of our desire to overhaul this Organization so as to make it more relevant, more credible, more effective and more efficient in the noble work it is doing throughout the world.

We have been considering important proposals that include bringing peace to a world fraught with danger; expanding the Security Council to make it more representative; creating a new Peacebuilding Commission to assist countries emerging from conflict; establishing a new Human Rights Council to replace the Human Rights Commission; seeking consensus on steps to reduce extreme poverty; and meeting other MDGs with regard to health, education, environment, access to potable water and women's rights. Finally, we have been considering management and Secretariat reforms so as to institute significant changes and to enhance transparency and accountability, and to promote codes of conduct and ethics for all staff members.

The outcome document reflects a consensus agreement at the level of the least common denominator for the international community. A number of promising proposals have been accepted in principle only, leaving the details to be worked out during the sixtieth session. It is plain to see that we have not fully discharged our responsibilities to take the practical actions that are needed today.

We must accept for now our inability to agree on wide-ranging proposals. There is no doubt that we have lost a unique opportunity, yet we must not give up. We must continue instead to strive to achieve tangible and lasting results.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): May I remind speakers once again to abide by the agreed five-minute time limit.

The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, President of the Russian Federation.

President Putin (*spoke in Russian*): For six decades the destiny of this world has been inseparably linked to the work of the United Nations — the contemporary, and one of the brightest symbols, of the victory over Nazism.

Let us recall that a commitment to the ideals of freedom and humanism united the world's nations in their joint fight against Nazism. The creation of the United Nations clearly reflected the will of civilized humanity to avert new and devastating wars and the revival of barbaric ideologies advocating violence, aggression or racial superiority.

In the 60 years of its existence, the United Nations has witnessed heated discussions and bitter disagreements. But the Organization has become a unique forum for dialogue among nations on how to build a safer world. These walls have witnessed the birth of many ideas on détente as well as a joint quest for, and the establishment of, the foundations of a new, confrontation-free world order. Looking back, we cannot but duly recognize this accomplishment by the United Nations.

In today's new historical context, the experience, authority and supreme legitimacy of the United Nations enables it to play an indispensable and truly unique role in global policy, economic and humanitarian cooperation.

Two years ago, from this very rostrum, I outlined the basics of Russia's approach to enhancing the

efficiency of the United Nations. Our position on this issue remains consistent and unchanged. Indeed, there is a need to adjust the Organization to new historic realities. But this process should be constructive. It should take into account both the lessons learned and the positive experience gained by the United Nations. And this process must unite, not separate. Only thus, through broad agreement, can we further strengthen the authority and legitimacy of the United Nations as well as its capacity to respond more effectively to the challenges of the twenty-first century.

I am convinced that terrorism today poses the main threat to human rights and freedoms and to the sustainable development of States and peoples. That is why it is the United Nations and its Security Council that must be the main centre for coordinating international cooperation in the fight against terrorism as the ideological successor of Nazism. Moreover, the United Nations and the Security Council must coordinate the settlement of the long-lasting regional conflicts that terrorists and extremists of all stripes parasitize by exploiting the historical burden of religious, ethnic and social confrontation.

It is not only through concerted action by States that we should counteract the ideologues of the division of civilizations and terrorist aggression; it is also crucial that we engage the broad potential of civil society, the mass media, cultural and humanitarian cooperation and equal interdenominational dialogue. Who but the United Nations will be able to take on the role of coordinating and organizing such work? In doing so, it can rely on the support of all Member States and on the cooperation of influential international organizations and entities aimed at promoting regional integration.

Russia intends to increase its participation both in responding to international crises and in the promotion of development and progress. Next year, as we preside over the Group of Eight, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Council of Europe, we will continue the joint work in this important area.

In conclusion, I should like to express the hope that this summit will be successful and that the United Nations will increase its influence and authority in the international community. Let us not forget that the Organization belongs to all of us and to no one in particular. May we have wisdom to preserve it for future generations.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Levy Patrick Mwanawasa, President of the Republic of Zambia.

President Mwanawasa: Allow me, on behalf of the Zambian delegation, to congratulate the Co-Chairpersons on having organized this important high-level review of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). I should like to thank the Secretary-General for his tireless efforts to provide well-researched documents to Member States and to facilitate this important high-level meeting.

In the year 2000, at the dawn of the new millennium, there was optimism for humankind, as the hope for change to a more democratic and equitable world appeared to be very promising. In 2000, optimism for the future gave rise to a shared desire to restructure the United Nations. Now, five years down the line, it has become clear that the international community has not found a common strategy to achieve the desired goals. My delegation calls for collaborative efforts between the developed and the developing countries to accelerate global efforts.

We applaud and support recent efforts aimed at providing more resources for development, among which are the provision of debt relief through the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative, the recent announcements by the Group of Eight countries of total debt cancellation and the efforts of some industrialized countries that have met the official development assistance target of 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP).

Let me share with this House Zambia's position on the MDGs. It is the view of my Government that, although the record so far indicates that Zambia has not made much progress on all eight targets, we have done enough to believe that they are achievable. In Zambia, we see the next decade as our time for a breakthrough. We are encouraged by the promise of total debt cancellation arising from our reaching the HIPC completion point in April this year. That development has now raised our prospects for achieving part of the MDGs by 2015. As I speak, we are preparing our five-year national development plan, which is anchored in inputs from district consultations. We are also working with the United Nations country team in Lusaka to firmly anchor the national development plan in the achievement of MDGs.

Our determination to succeed is based on the fact that in the past two and half years, Zambia has registered positive growth in agriculture. Real GDP growth in that sector was 7.5 per cent in 2004, having increased from 4.5 per cent in 2003.

In the social sectors, we have recorded some positive developments in education, with increases in enrolment at all levels. However, that sector still faces challenges related to an inadequate education infrastructure.

There has been notable improvement in the health sector. The burden of malaria, the number-one cause of mortality, has been reduced through innovative and vigorous health service delivery programmes such as Roll Back Malaria. HIV/AIDS remains a major obstacle in the development process, as most of our human resource base is being depleted. My Government has put in place a multisectoral response to the pandemic and has scaled up its interventions through advocacy, counselling and antiretroviral therapy.

In terms of resource mobilization, I am glad to inform participants that Zambia is one of the countries that have benefited from the Monterrey Consensus on financing for development. We have agreed with our cooperating partners on good and efficient aid modalities.

My Government has put in place prudent financial and public expenditure systems that will ensure efficiency and transparency. We have declared zero tolerance for corruption and would like to see greater support by the international community for the collaborative work required to make such a programme succeed.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Alfredo Palacio, President of the Republic of Ecuador.

President Palacio (*spoke in Spanish*): First, I would like to express the solidarity of the people and the Government of Ecuador with our brothers and sisters in the south of the United States, affected by the violence of Hurricane Katrina.

Today Ecuador reaffirms the commitment assumed by heads of State or Government at the Millennium Assembly held in New York in 2000. The Millennium Development Goals are a minimum, not a maximum agenda: a starting point, not the end. They are a basic commitment that must be shouldered by all the world's Governments.

My Government proposes that the new world order must be built on the triple basis of the economy, international law and biology. At the national level, I have incorporated this proposal into the profile of the Ecuadorian citizen of the twenty-first century: a healthy, educated and productive individual.

As soon as I assumed the presidency four months ago, I paved the way for the reciprocal commitments needed to insert all our Government plans and programmes into the framework of the Millennium Development Goals. This is the guarantee for a national transformation, the foundations of which must be firmly established during our term of office. I have created the ministerial-level National Secretariat for the Millennium Development Goals to ensure the full realization of these dreams and utopias of an unwavering State policy.

I have asked my people to agree, first of all, on the quality of the nation we want, and then on the ways to achieve it. The homeland we dream of begins with the re-establishment of the rule of law and the inauguration of a State based upon rights.

My Government has organized four key areas in which to attain the MDGs: health, social security, education and productivity. Here, one prerequisite is the restoration of the rule of law, which requires the protection of civil and political rights.

Today we are working on the political reform of the State, including constitutional, party system and electoral reforms. A referendum is being organized based on a process of national consensus involving all the political and social forces of the country.

The reactivation of production is also equally urgent. It brooks no delay. Current growth of the gross domestic product (GDP) is 2.4 per cent per annum. We need a 3.5 per cent to 4.5 per cent annual growth level to turn around recession, reactivate the productive sector, invest in the social sector and increase the purchasing power of our people. Above and beyond that, however, we will have to double those figures in order to attain sustainable development for our nation.

To be specific, we need to foster growth, based on increased investment. Investment in the oil sector and trade liberalization, although significant, will not

be enough. It is indispensable to pool public and private resources in the non-oil productive sector, to create jobs in sectors such as tourism, manufacturing, agro-industry and construction.

A key point of the Millennium Goals in Ecuador is universal health insurance, which aims to provide full health care coverage to the entire population by the year 2015, covering the entire range of human health issues. Current coverage in our country is 20 per cent; we expect to finish our Administration in January 2007 with health coverage levels of 45 per cent.

Investment in and the development of science and technology are also included in the MDGs. Latin America's investment in this sector totals 1.6 per cent of world investment. Europe and Canada together account for 38 per cent, Europe alone for 28 per cent and Japan for 14 per cent. Yet in Latin America, with a population of nearly 400 million, investment stands at 0.58 per cent of GDP. Ecuador has historically invested less than 0.08 per cent of its GDP in this sector, and this is one of the key reasons for its backwardness and dependency.

We in Ecuador have made a preliminary diagnosis of the advances, delays, the current situation of the Millennium Goals and immediate challenges, and we have also conducted an exercise related to viability and costs. I have the privilege and the satisfaction to present this first national report, copies of which are being distributed now. This work has been possible thanks to the coordinated effort of several agencies which I wish to thank: entities of the United Nations system in Ecuador, multilateral donors, bilateral donors such as Spain, the Netherlands and Switzerland, and our National Secretariat for the Millennium Goals.

In the report, we put a date on Ecuador's future: 2015. We also define our ideal vision for our country for 2020, when we shall mark two centuries of political independence.

Social investment and human development are possible with ongoing policies and a collective will that ensures the progressive and fair distribution of income and an appropriate use of the budget.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. François Bozizé, President of the Central African Republic.

President Bozizé (*spoke in French*): Our thoughts about the state of the world five years ago led us, after a thorough stocktaking, to resolve to do everything possible to improve it by 2015. It was for that reason that we adopted the Millennium Declaration, in which we made a commitment to tackle together the problems of security, peace, development, human rights and fundamental freedoms. Five years later, how do we measure that commitment?

Before giving my opinion on the matter, I should like to reiterate our great appreciation for the way in which the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Jean Ping, conducted the proceedings of the fifty-ninth session that has just ended. Through him, I should like once again to pay tribute to the elder statesman, El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba, as well as to other heads of State of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community who have made a great contribution to furthering democratic renewal in the Central African Republic. We also continue to give our support to our brother, Secretary-General Kofi Annan, whose continued work in encouraging States to implement the Millennium Development Goals remains unwavering and outstanding.

The situation in the Central African Republic before 15 March 2003 ruled out any possibility of progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. At that time, all of our State institutions were in disarray, the country was in economic ruin, we were occupied by irregular foreign troops, the young people were left to fend for themselves, and fundamental freedoms were flouted. We were then sorely in need of the patriotic upsurge that allowed us to establish a consensual transition which, with the full support of the international community, put an end to the divided state of the country. Most importantly, it allowed us to organize general elections in a transparent and credible way — as acknowledged by international observers — so that our country has now been restored to constitutional legality.

For me this is the occasion to thank the international community wholeheartedly, beginning with the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie, which have remained by our side as we have thus sought to return to constitutional legality.

I should also like to take this opportunity to say to the host country that the Central African Republic,

where for the last six weeks there have been torrential rains that have wreaked considerable damage, cannot but express its strong feelings of compassion and sympathy to the United States of America, so hard hit by the passage of Hurricane Katrina through the Gulf of Mexico.

I should emphasize here that, in the face of the difficulties of every kind that may be encountered by Member States, large or small, solidarity must remain the key word; it is the price of peace worldwide.

My country, emerging with difficulty from a long decade of crises, feels a strong need for solidarity. After a period of transition, a new period of reconstruction is beginning for it. From this podium, I launch an appeal for solidarity: the people of the Central African Republic, who are doing everything they can to staunch the wounds of their crisis, need the help of all our friends to embark steadfastly and lastingly on the road to peace and stability.

Admittedly, the main effort must come from us. I can assure you that the people of the Central African Republic are determined to take charge of their own destiny. The Government has taken courageous measures to re-establish security throughout the entire national territory, to calm the political climate, re-organize our civil service and improve State revenues. In the same way, we have taken steps to relaunch our principle areas of production. But all of those efforts require time to bear fruit. Without immediate and strong support from the international community, particularly the Bretton Woods institutions, the danger of finding ourselves back at square one remains great.

Since the completion of the electoral process, the people of the Central African Republic have not stopped wondering about the timid financial support of its friends — the same friends who helped us make a political success of our consensual transition. It would be a shame to have gone so far down this inspiring path, only to find we are not able to go any further. Better an ounce of prevention than a pound of cure. In other words, resolute support for the reconstruction of our country is the only reasonable way to avoid going backwards, as it is clear that extreme poverty is the fundamental cause of the tensions that are liable to rekindle another crisis.

The Secretary-General noted, in his report of March 2005, that: "Unless all these causes are advanced, none will succeed" (*A/59/2005, para. 17*). I would add that it is the fight for solidarity against poverty that we must fight together when we emerge from this plenary meeting.

No one can doubt the services that the United Nations has rendered to restore and consolidate peace and security throughout the world. Similarly, no one would challenge the relevance of the proposals made by the Secretary-General to re-galvanize our Organization. In order then to give greater strength and credibility to the United Nations, we must seize the opportunity afforded by this plenary meeting to make a solemn commitment to take firm and courageous decisions.

As an African country and a member of the African Union, we fully subscribe to the position of the African Union that calls for a rebalancing of responsibilities within United Nations bodies, so that the African continent may occupy a more just place within them.

With respect to human rights, my Government solemnly reaffirms its commitment to work tirelessly to re-establish the rule of law. To that end, we will focus on strengthening national capacity-building of our human rights institutions and will comply with all of our international obligations.

In conclusion, it is my hope that a more active form of solidarity will take effect among Member States in order to promote peace, development, security and human rights throughout the world.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): Before introducing the next speaker, I would ask the Assembly to please come to order and not to talk too much in the Hall, because it is disturbing for those who want to listen. If representatives have something to discuss, they should please do so outside the Hall, out of respect for the speakers.

The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Branko Crvenkovski, President of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

President Crvenkovski: Addressing this distinguished forum provides us with the privilege and chance to seize the historic occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the signing of the Charter, thus giving new impetus to the efforts to deal with both old and emerging challenges and threats.

Today we have gathered here to make a fair assessment of the progress made in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the social, economic, environmental and related fields. At the same time, in order to meet the targets by the year 2015, we will be forward-looking in defining steps and actions to be taken or reinforced in order to achieve what we set as our priorities five years ago.

We agreed in Monterrey that development is our shared responsibility and requires our common endeavour. We welcome additional proposals for innovative sources of financing and the recent agreement by Ministers of Finance of the Group of Eight on multilateral debt relief.

The Republic of Macedonia is strongly committed to the full implementation of the MDGs at the national level. In June 2005, supported by the United Nations Development Programme, we published a report on the implementation of the MDGs at the national level. The report indicates that significant progress has been achieved in regard to a number of targets.

The fight against international terrorism remains among our top priorities. We strongly support the comprehensive United Nations counter-terrorism strategy and we feel encouraged by the recent adoption of the United Nations Convention against nuclear terrorism.

We support the efforts aimed at strengthening the existing non-proliferation and verification regimes, as well as new initiatives in this field such as the Global Threat Reduction Initiative. Coming from the region affected by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, we strongly support the full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

The Republic of Macedonia remains committed to further democratic and economic development in compliance with our top national priorities — full-fledged membership in the European Union and NATO; and we recognize the importance of good-neighbourly relations. Consequently, we are promoting regional cooperation in order to achieve sustainable peace and stability in Southern and Eastern Europe. In this regard, we believe that the last open issue in the Balkans, the final status of Kosovo, will be resolved by Belgrade, Pristina and the international community, thus meeting the requirements of the United Nations. The final status solution should bring lasting peace, democracy and security to the region.

The Republic of Macedonia strongly supports the comprehensive United Nations reform, the aim of which is to adapt the Organization to the changing realities and to strengthen its capacity to cope with the threats and challenges of the twenty-first century. We welcome the proposal for enhancing the Organization's peacebuilding capacity by establishing the Peacebuilding Commission to bridge the institutional gap between the end of conflict and the resumption of sustainable development, as well as the proposal to enhance the Organization's capacity for the promotion and protection of human rights by establishing a standing Human Rights Council. We also believe that the United Nations Democracy Fund will contribute to the promotion of democracy worldwide.

The reform of the Security Council remains an essential part of the overall United Nations reform process, with the aim of adapting the Council to the new realities and making it more representative and more efficient in maintaining international peace and security.

In conclusion, I am confident that our deliberations will result in the adoption of an action-oriented outcome document that will reflect our strong commitment to making a better world for our own generation and for those to come. I strongly believe that the effects of the implementation of our decisions will soon be visible.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Jalal Talabani, President of the Republic of Iraq.

President Talabani (*spoke in Arabic*): It is a great pleasure and honour for me to convey the greetings and appreciation of the Government and people of my country, Iraq. Here, I want to recall Iraq's achievements since the dawn of history. It is the place where writing was invented, the first legislation was drafted and the human spirit and will established great civilizations, the influence of which spread around the world and left its own distinctive imprint on the history of humanity.

Today's Iraq stands once again as a partner in the international order. All of us hope to enhance the principles of balance and justice to create an international dimension for development. This dimension would reflect our joint responsibility in facing terrorism, poverty, environmental imbalance, unemployment, marginalization, irrational use of wealth and resources, the unjustifiable violations of human rights, aggression, destruction and other challenges that face our modern world.

Iraq's experience over three decades, resulting in a unique experience and profound historical lesson, can be summarized in one sentence: development is the other face of freedom and democracy. It is the other face of the progress made by individuals, society and the State. Hence, a system of good governance that respects human rights and stands on democratic foundations is the only way to realize genuine development as a means to expanding the choices of the individual.

Despite the fact that Iraq had enough human and material resources, the dictatorial regime that ruled it for those decades fictionalized development. It committed crimes of genocide against the Iraqi people in Kurdistan, in areas such as Halabja, and in the south during the popular uprising. It launched wars against its neighbours. It also failed to manage relations between the forces that represent society on the basis of a just, democratic system and wasted the country's wealth. The regime placed a heavy burden on the past, present and future of Iraq. It was a bad example of a regime in a world that realized that dictatorships could turn from a local threat to a regional, and perhaps, international one. That was exactly what happened in the case of Saddam's dictatorship.

We are trying to carry out reforms and rebuild what the dictatorship destroyed in Iraq. But we also call for the reform of all the institutions of the United Nations in such a way as to strengthen the role of the United Nations with regard to international peace and security, as well as to international cooperation in the economic, cultural and social fields. It should also respect the principles of the equality and sovereignty of States. Reform should be achieved by consensus, taking into account the views and positions of Members. It should also provide a basis for reactivating the role of the General Assembly in ensuring international peace and security by setting up mechanisms that guarantee respect for and the implementation of its resolutions.

We believe that the reform of the Security Council should result in greater transparency and wider participation by non-members. In expanding the membership of the Council, we should ensure justice and equity in the representation of Member States, and establish controls for the use of the veto, stressing the fairness of the principles according to which members of the Council are chosen.

Another facet of Iraq's experience offers an important lesson. Since 1991, the Iraqi Kurdistan region in the north has managed to rid itself of the tyranny of dictatorship and implement successful development programmes, accompanied by a democratic parliamentary system and the rational investment of resources. Despite the scarcity of such resources, civil society organizations have managed to have an effective influence, and the region has shown itself to be open to the world at the economic, political and cultural levels.

The experience of Iraqi Kurdistan shows truly that human development cannot continue to make progress or achieve the desired results in a society in which injustice and human rights violations prevail. It also shows that democracy and freedom are two essential conditions for economic, environmental and cultural development.

In this connection, I would like to address the Assembly in the other official language of Iraq, Kurdish.

(*spoke in Kurdish; English text provided by the delegation*)

I would like to convey the greetings of the people of Iraqi Kurdistan, which is part of Iraq, to the Assembly. It is a source of pride for us that Iraqi Kurdistan has become a model for democratic experience, rehabilitation and economic, cultural and social development, just as it was a fortress for free Iraqis in their struggle against dictatorship. This proves that a free and democratic people can set a model for development in every respect.

(*spoke in Arabic*)

Iraq managed to get rid of that regime after a war of liberation. Every province in Iraq can now benefit from Kurdistan's experience. At the same time,

however, we must rid ourselves of the remnants of backwardness in other areas of Iraq. In order for the national experience to move ahead on a clear path, with clear goals, the redistribution of authority should be achieved on the basis of free exercise of democracy and the fair distribution of wealth in such a way as to guarantee all the rights of the citizens without discrimination or marginalization.

That is not an easy task. Today, Iraq is facing a most brutal campaign of terror and insurrection waged by the forces of darkness. Terrorists are killing hundreds of Iraqis, destroying our wealth and trying their best to stop our march towards the just goal of rebuilding our country by creating a constitutional and fair regime subject to popular scrutiny. The terrorists target individual Iraqis; they have declared a war of annihilation against innocent civilians. They aim to destroy every development ambition. Furthermore, they want to make Iraq a base for both regional and international threats — a centre for dark, blind terrorism.

Iraq's war on terror requires broad Arab and international support for the sake of not only Iraq but also the whole world. Defeating terrorism in Iraq is an essential condition for defeating it throughout the world. Thus, Iraq has a right to build a modern, democratic and federal State. In achieving that end, Iraq has the right to look towards its friends in the international community, including the international lending agencies, to write off its debts, review the current compensation programme and provide economic expertise so as to enable the country to avoid possible pitfalls in moving towards a market economy.

Iraq is a founding and active member of the League of Arab States; we support the charter of that organization and the decisions of Arab summits. We support the Palestinian people in their struggle to achieve their legitimate rights, in accordance with international resolutions. Development requires peace, as well as investments from various sources.

Iraq has risen out of the ashes of dictatorship with all the attendant backwardness, waste of resources and abuse of people. Now, we are opening our hearts and hoping that the world understands the value and the importance of Iraq's experience in fighting terrorism and its rejection of the terrorists' backward ideology. Iraq is determined to rebuild its present and future with patience and determination, on the basis of human rights and democracy.

From this rostrum, we stress that Iraq is now free, thanks to the will and awareness of its people, the loyalty of our friends, the help of international organizations and the Coalition's war of liberation under the leadership of the United States of America.

Iraq's experience offers many lessons and outcomes, both from the period of its struggle against dictatorship and today. Iraq has no hesitation in openly and frankly stating that it is in desperate need of expertise, investment and moral support for its efforts to fight terrorism. The form that the democratic, pluralistic and federal Iraq will take is not quite clear yet. Democracy, mutual respect and the fair distribution of power all need time.

Lastly, I urge Member States to participate in rebuilding Iraq in a spirit of partnership and mutual responsibility and respect, based on the rational distribution of interests.

We should know that the rebuilding of Iraq will undoubtedly mean the defeat of terrorism, which has become a danger to humanity and to civilization. We should also be in no doubt that the actions of terrorists make the future uncertain for the international family.

I would like to thank the Assembly and wish it every success in its endeavours. We are all partners in failure, in success and in responsibility.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Alyaksandr Lukashenka, President of the Republic of Belarus.

President Lukashenka (*spoke in Russian*): Heads of State are convening here at the United Nations in order to take an honest look at today's world. We must, together, answer the most important question: are we leading our countries and humankind along the right path? We must answer that question for ourselves and for our nations. Otherwise, we stand no chance of getting out of the present deadlock.

Fifteen years have passed since the break-up of my country, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. That event dramatically changed the world order. The Soviet Union, despite all the mistakes and blunders of its leaders, was a source of hope and support for many States and peoples. The Soviet Union provided for

balance in the global system. Today, the world is unipolar, with all the consequences that stem from that fact. Once-prosperous Yugoslavia was devastated and has disappeared from the map of Europe. Long-suffering Afghanistan became a hotbed of conflicts and drug trafficking. The bloody slaughter in Iraq is continuing to the present day. That country has turned into a source of instability for the entire region.

Iran and North Korea are being viewed through the sights of a gun, as are Colombia, Cuba and other States.

Belarus is a nation like the majority represented in this Hall. We emerged from the debris of the cold war to become a State advanced in science and technology, one inhabited by 10 million highly educated and tolerant people.

Like others, what we need from the world is peace and stability. Nothing more. The rest we shall create ourselves through our own efforts.

My country is free from conflicts. Different nations and nationalities peacefully coexist in Belarus, each practising religions of their own and having their own way of life. We do not cause trouble for our neighbours, neither through territorial claims nor by trying to influence their choice of the way to development. We gave up our nuclear arms and voluntarily relinquished the rights of a nuclear successor to the Soviet Union. We have established a lasting and successful union with Russia as our very close neighbour. We are building our country, using our own wits and on the basis of our own traditions. But it is obvious that the choice of my people is not to everyone's pleasure. It does not please those who strive to rule the unipolar world. Can anyone wonder how?

If there are no conflicts, they are invented. If there are no pretexts for intervention, imaginary ones are created. To that end, a very convenient banner was chosen: democracy and human rights; not in their original sense of the rule of people and personal dignity, but solely and exclusively in the interpretation of the leadership of the United States of America.

Regrettably, the United Nations, though it belongs to us all, allows itself to be used as a tool of this policy. I am saying this with particular bitterness and pain as President of a country that co-founded the United Nations, after sacrificing the lives of one third of its people during the Second World War for the sake of our own freedom and the freedom of Europe and the entire world.

But how can the United Nations be minding imaginary problems, while unable to see true disasters and catastrophes, of a calibre and nature such that nobody other than the United Nations as a community of civilized nations can cope with them and restore justice and order?

Quite recently, in a nearby Chamber we were shown maps and graphs allegedly depicting weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Were those weapons found? They do not exist. In the meantime, Iraq was razed with bombs and devastated; people were brought to utmost despair.

Has there been an open and independent trial under United Nations supervision of the prisoners at Guantánamo? How many of them are there, and who are they?

Afghanistan was ravaged with rockets and bombs under the pretext of finding Bin Laden. Was the world's number-one terrorist captured? Where is he now? He is at large, but Afghanistan and Iraq has begun to generate hundreds and thousands of international terrorists. Foreign troops occupied independent Afghanistan, but drug production grew tenfold. Did those troops enter the country for that purpose?

The leaders of the destroyed Yugoslavia and Iraq were put behind bars on groundless, absurd and far-fetched accusations. The trial of Slobodan Milosevic has been made into a long-running caricature. Saddam Hussein was abandoned to the mercy of the victor, like in barbarian times. There is nobody to defend their rights except the United Nations. Their States no longer exist; they are destroyed.

AIDS and other diseases are ravaging Africa and Asia. Poverty and deprivation have become a real and not a virtual weapon of mass destruction; moreover, a racially selective one. Who will be able to stop this?

Who will insist that the United States of America put an end to its attempts against Cuba and Venezuela? Those countries will independently determine their own lives.

Trafficking in persons has become a flourishing business. Sexual slavery of women and children is seen as a common thing, almost normal. Who will protect

them and bring to justice consumers of this live commodity?

This, in short, is the distressing state of the transition to the unipolar world.

Was it for that purpose that we established the United Nations? Is it not high time for the United Nations to put an end to internal corruption scandals and begin to address the anguish and misery in the world? The answer to this question, in our view, is very clear.

Let us be honest to the end. We cannot bury our head in the sand like an ostrich. In the end, the United Nations is us. Therefore, it is up to us to take the destiny of the world in our own hands. We must realize that the unipolar world is a world with a single track, a one-dimensional world. We must become aware that the diversity of ways to progress is an enduring value of our civilization; the only one that can ensure stability in this world.

The freedom to choose a way to develop is the main precondition for a democratic world order. That is exactly what this Organization was established for.

I hope that the mighty of the world will understand this too. Otherwise, the unipolar world will ultimately strike them back.

If we agree among us on this principal point, then we shall succeed in implementing the principles of multipolarity, diversity and freedom of choice, both in reality and in the United Nations documents that we must abide by. We shall protect the world from terrorism and vulnerable women and children from slavery. We would protect all those that are unprotected.

It is then that the United Nations would become the organization of the genuinely united nations. This, and not a numerical increase in the Security Council membership, is precisely the core of the United Nations reform.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Ricardo Lagos Escobar, President of Chile.

President Lagos Escobar (*spoke in Spanish*): Chile is attending this plenary meeting with a mixture of hope, but also, it must be stated, with frustration. Let us be clear on this. We have not achieved what we had hoped by the 60th anniversary of our Organization.

Of course, the United Nations has played a key role in the history of the past few decades. Its contribution to the settlement of 170 conflicts and in 60 peacekeeping missions since 1948 bears witness to that fundamental presence.

However, the United Nations and the current international agenda are more than this. We have stressed the need to promote comprehensive reform, based on the triad of security, human rights and development. This triad will form a whole, focusing on the human person.

For Chile, multilateralism is not merely a conceptual category or a slogan, but a political reality. It is part of the local policy when an open country like Chile deals with the world. The national interest of a relatively small State such as Chile seems better protected by an effective multilateral system. A system of rights and duties, in which we advance together, assuming the tasks of a fairer and more balanced international order.

Because we believe in this dimension of rights and duties, we went to Haiti as soon as the Security Council made its first appeal. There was an ethical and political obligation to help to build peace in the poorest country on our continent. Today, we hope that elections will be duly held and that international cooperation will be forthcoming in a timely manner.

In the same spirit, we have worked to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. We have managed to fulfil those goals through clear public policies, especially in support of the most destitute sectors, the disinherited of this world.

Today, in this Assembly, a question resounds: When and how are we going to promote a policy of global public goods that endeavours at the global level to narrow the gaps between rich and poor and to move towards greater equality?

Globalization is here to stay. And because it is a reality, it should be expanded for the benefit of the great majorities in the spirit of a global civic compact.

The draft outcome document of this High-level Plenary Meeting, painstakingly finalized a few hours before the meeting opened, must be viewed with interest and satisfaction. Although that document does not fully meet our expectations, we consider it to be a starting point on the road to changes needed by the Organization. That document is not a goal in itself. It is

the beginning of a road. Most of the text is the statement of a development agenda, whose implementation requires a global alliance.

We especially welcome the establishment of a Human Rights Council, whose details we hope can be fully worked out before the end of this session of the General Assembly. We hope that in this Human Rights Council all the Member States will be studied in the same transparent way.

Once established, the Peacebuilding Commission and the Democracy Fund will provide direction for our future activities. In that regard, we should like to move forward to establish them simultaneously. One will contribute to reconstruction and reconciliation in countries emerging from conflict; the other will enhance national capacities to implement democratic principles and practices. Chile has made an initial contribution and supports the establishment of the Fund.

We must translate our strong condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations into a decisive political impetus to finalize the comprehensive convention on terrorism before the end of this session.

These initiatives, along with other current and future achievements, give us hope and point to such pending tasks as the establishment of a Security Council that reflects the political realities of today's world, and not that which prevailed at the end of the Second World War. Sixty years on, we need a Security Council that reflects today's world.

Lastly, I should like to say that Chile pledges its full political will to move ahead with these tasks in order to usher in a world in which multilateralism is the framework for harmonious international co-existence. There is still time for this session to become a historic turning point, a moment at which the inevitable reform of our Organization is initiated and forcefully carries the United Nations into a future of efficiency and relevance. That is what humankind both needs and demands in the twenty-first century.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Al Hadji Yahya A.J.J. Jammeh, President of the Republic of the Gambia.

President Jammeh: Five years ago, we gathered in this Assembly and adopted the Millennium Declaration. We set out some time-bound development goals whose achievement would significantly improve the lives of the hundreds of millions of dispossessed people in the world. Now, with the first five-year review, we are all still very much committed to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and are still agreed that, with focus and will, they are indeed attainable by the target date of 2015. We must admit, however, that the overall scorecard, especially for sub-Saharan Africa, is not all too encouraging, because very little progress is being made towards some of the critical Goals.

There is no gainsaying that much more has to be done, particularly in the area of resource mobilization, to clear the pathways for faster and smoother progress towards the attainment of the MDGs, especially for the developing world. We must improve the flow and quality of official development assistance (ODA), including the early attainment of the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for ODA.

We must strive to reduce leakages from the economies of developing countries and open up significantly more markets for commodities from developing countries, in order to help stimulate a faster rate of growth and development in those countries. We must do more to help ease the strangulation of debt on our already weak and fragile economies and resolve to achieve immediately total cancellation of the debt of least developed countries. If we do not wish to suffer failure in our quest for a just and happier world, or see the cost of achieving the MDGs skyrocket, we must go beyond commitments and mere words and ensure that the resources that developing countries require are adequate, predictable and available without any further delay.

The world must take initiatives to redress imbalances in the area of information, communication and technology, for that area has become a source of power and opportunity in today's globalized world. We must therefore do everything to reduce the digital divide between North and South. It is only in that way that the noble intentions articulated in New York, Monterrey and Johannesburg will find expression in ways that touch and transform the lives of the world's dispossessed people, so much that they can live in a better world devoid of despair and destruction.

Regarding progress on the MDGs, I wish to inform this gathering that the commitment of the

Gambia to the Millennium Development Goals is not in doubt. The MDGs provide the benchmarks for all our development endeavours and have been integrated into our poverty reduction strategy paper and our national development strategies. In that regard, we have been able to use them as the main components of our poverty-monitoring system. We have been making steady — and, in some cases, rapid — progress towards attaining the Goals.

Both the United Nations Development Programme's *Human Development Reports* and reports of the Economic Commission for Africa indicate that the Gambia is among the very few countries that are on course towards attaining, by the target year of 2015, the goals of reducing child malnutrition and mortality, as well as maternal mortality; combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; achieving environmental sustainability through a reversal of the loss of environmental resources and increasing access to safe drinking water.

As we continue on that course, we recognize that universal access to sexual and reproductive health and the protection of reproductive rights are critical to achieving the MDGs. The Gambia is also one of only four countries in Africa that are ahead in meeting the goal of achieving universal primary education and gender equality in education by the year 2015. We have been able to register those successes in spite of serious constraints, thanks to my Government's adoption, since 1994, of sound and appropriate policies and programmes for economic growth and development for the betterment of the Gambian people.

I must hasten to add that, in spite of the achievements already indicated, the challenges that lie ahead are enormous. The Gambia still faces the challenges of inadequate resources to implement the poverty reduction strategy paper, inadequate funds to finance agricultural development, lack of effective market access and a host of other difficulties. To compound those problems, we are also spending 40 per cent of our budget on debt repayment.

All of us gathered here today should continue to give high priority to resolving the lingering conflicts on the African continent, considering that peace and security are sine qua non conditions for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, which we committed ourselves to achieving by 2015.

Against that backdrop, we in the Gambia are unreservedly committed to the realization of a peaceful, stable and conflict-free Africa. I therefore call on the entire international community to provide special opportunities for Africa through increased foreign direct investment, better and less restrictive trade policies and practices and also significantly greater volumes of Official Development Assistance to Africa.

We are about to enter the critical decade leading to our target year 2015, with high hopes for the realization of the many commitments we made before and those we shall make now. Ours is a world whose attention needs to be continuously and persistently drawn at every turn to the realities of excruciating poverty, famine and disease. We must not let slip the opportunity to revive the world's interest in those problems and its determination to confront them. It is my hope that the partnerships that we have forged for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals will again be reinforced and together we will work towards achieving this noble mission with a strong, reformed and revitalized United Nations at the centre.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The General Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Amadou Toumani Touré, President of the Republic of Mali.

President Touré (*spoke in French*): First of all, I should like to greet and congratulate the two eminent persons designated to chair the proceedings of this High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly. My greetings and congratulations also go to the Secretary-General, our brother Kofi Annan, for his tremendous work at the head of our Organization. I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Gabonese President, as well, for the skill with which he discharged his duties at the helm of the General Assembly. Let me also join in thanking Professor Jeffrey Sachs and all of his Millennium team.

Five years after the Millennium Summit, substantial progress has been realized, it is true, but some countries, particularly those in Africa, still have many of their people living in extreme poverty, and even in precarious conditions. In Mali, the State, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society, has adopted a strategic framework to combat poverty, which expresses our will to take development actions that are better organized,

more consensual, and therefore, more effective and capable of rapidly reducing poverty in a lasting way. The progress report on implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Mali takes stock of our achievements and of the obstacles encountered, and we have taken this opportunity as well to assess what still needs to be done to attain the Goals.

The MDGs are the surest way to speed up our advance towards well-being, so long-sought and hoped-for. Mali fully subscribes to the vision and the strategic choices of the MDGs, namely, to invest massively and especially in human capital, and in basic infrastructure, because it is thereby that everything else will be built. In the end we wish to create an environment where roads connect communities, where agricultural production no longer depends on the vagaries of the weather, and which facilitates access to water and to commodities such as energy and telecommunications.

At the same time, development projects in targeted sectors need financing that is stable, adequate, predictable and lasting. The Monterrey Consensus recognizes that development is a shared responsibility, which begins with the efforts of developing countries themselves, supported by the commitment of our partners. Therefore, in following up on the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative and the decision recently taken by the Group of Eight (G-8) to cancel the multilateral debt of a number of countries, including Mali, our partners must now accelerate movement towards a substantial increase in official development assistance (ODA), so as to achieve 0.7 per cent of GDP. Once again our great appreciation goes to those countries that have achieved or exceeded that threshold. ODA seems to us to be more indispensable than ever, if we are to put in place infrastructure for education, health and social services. Private investment has its role to play to drive the vigorous growth necessary for economic momentum in the African continent. Africa needs new resources. We also need an ongoing dialogue with our partners to readjust the allocation of those resources in the light of our development needs. Let me say here how much I welcome the original proposal made by the President of the Republic of France, Jacques Chirac, to levy a tax on airline tickets to mobilize supplementary resources essential for development.

With respect to United Nations reform, the African Union has made consistent, balanced and fair proposals that would allow the Security Council to be more representative of the international community as a whole and of current geopolitical realities.

Development can only be achieved in a context of peace and security. Respect for human rights and democratic principles will make a great contribution, to be sure. Mali is deeply committed to democratic values and respect for human rights. In a few weeks, we are going to have an important meeting in Bamako to review implementation, five years on, of the Declaration on the Practices of Democracy, Rights and Freedoms in the French-Speaking Community. Furthermore, Mali, as current chair of the Community of Democracies, welcomes yesterday's launching of the Democracy Fund and the Secretary-General's proposal to create a Human Rights Council.

In conclusion, I should like to reiterate that this High-Level Meeting is taking place at a particularly crucial moment. Our people are tired of promises and particularly tired of speeches. Our responsibility towards future generations is immense. Young people are more and more impatient regarding their education and especially regarding jobs.

Mali will continue to advocate for a world which is more just and more balanced. I do believe that this other world is possible and that we have the means to build it.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil.

President Da Silva (*spoke in Portuguese; English text furnished by the delegation*): The Millennium Goals are a significant achievement of contemporary humanism. They represent the victory of the values of human solidarity over the doctrines of moral indifference and political omission with regard to the excluded. They show that we have achieved a higher level of collective awareness. They are rooted in the conviction that we must fight inequalities while respecting and appreciating diversity. They express the vision of democracy according to which political rights are inseparable from economic, social and cultural rights. They underline the need to increase the production of wealth, but to make the benefits available to all, never eliminating — but rather

protecting and renewing — the sources of life. That will surely require new creative and responsible relations on the part of human beings with nature and with one another.

In short, the Goals express the ideal of a civilization in which peace is based on justice. No other goals could be more just or appropriate. Our challenge is to make them real. In order to do so, we need more than routine mechanisms and procedures. In most countries, the Goals will simply not be met under existing financing schemes and restrictions on aid flows. We must take immediate and courageous steps. The resources available for fighting poverty and hunger must be significantly expanded; we need to provide development opportunities to poor countries.

If developed countries attain the required strategic vision, they will realize that that new posture, that additional effort, is not only fair, but absolutely necessary. Otherwise, I fear that international peace and security will remain a mirage.

I have always said — and I wish to reiterate — that each country must do its own part. In Brazil, we have strived to implement the same measures that we have been proposing in the international arena. We do not presume to be a model for others, but we are motivated by great enthusiasm and political resolve. We have adopted the Millennium Development Goals as mandatory benchmarks for all public policies. We have established a national award recognizing best practices in social solidarity in municipalities, churches, the business sector and social movements.

I should like briefly to highlight initiatives by our Government in four areas: the fight against hunger, the right to employment, the promotion of racial and gender equality and environmental preservation.

Today, the "zero hunger" programme — whose primary tool is the family stipend — reaches 7.5 million families, or some 30 million Brazilians. By the end of my tenure, all families living below the poverty line will have been incorporated into the programme. Brazil will finally ensure for all its children the right to eat every day.

We have come far, and we have earned the credibility to aim at even more ambitious steps towards social justice. Brazil has resumed a sustained growth rate, creating jobs and distributing wealth. In the past 32 months, we have created 3.2 million new jobs in the formal sector, in addition to hundreds of thousands of jobs created in the area of family agriculture.

Attention to women's rights and the promotion of racial equality permeate all our public policies. We have created special secretariats with ministerial standing to ensure that our Government team will actually enable us to achieve the Goals. I am very moved by one example in particular: poor black and indigenous people educated in public schools can now attend universities because of our affirmative action programme, with financial support for poor students. Another example: we have ended the centuries-old practice of discriminating against rural women by allowing only men to own land. Now both men and women can enjoy the right to land ownership. Agricultural credit also used to be the privilege of men alone, now both men and women farmers can take out loans.

With regard to the environment, I am pleased to highlight the consistent drop in deforestation rates in the Amazon region and the new prospects emerging for the region's 22 million inhabitants as a result of the sustainable Amazon plan, an innovative project aimed at ecologically oriented social and economic development.

Brazil is becoming a more productive and caring country. We are ready and willing to join forces with nations around the world to achieve the Millennium Goals for the benefit of poor people and all of humanity throughout the world.

I should like to conclude by highlighting one point that I made yesterday in my statement to the Security Council. There is an urgent need to reform that body to make it more legitimate and representative; otherwise, the United Nations will not be able to carry out its historic role.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. James A. Michel, President of the Republic of Seychelles.

President Michel: My delegation congratulates you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly and expresses its felicitations to your predecessor, Mr. Jean Ping, for having prepared the ground so well for this historic world summit. Our congratulations go also to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and to his team on the remarkable preparation and organization of the summit, without

which such a major event would have been restricted in its ambitions and its impact.

We gather in the United States two weeks after Hurricane Katrina caused so much loss of life and so much material damage. Let me express once again my deep condolences and heartfelt sympathy to the Government and the people of the United States of America, as well as to all those who have been affected by that catastrophe.

Late last year, with the tsunami in the Indian Ocean, and now, with the hurricane in America, we are reminded that natural disasters know no borders. Such tragedies, wherever they hit, stress the importance of collective responses and, in the case of countries with limited relief and emergency resources, underscore the need for the coordination of international efforts within the United Nations framework.

Of equal importance is the collective task of investing in preparedness and reducing vulnerability to natural disasters, in order to strengthen national and regional capacities in the fields of risk assessment, hazard monitoring, warning systems, information- and knowledge-sharing and training. Let us enhance the effectiveness of our collective efforts before, during and after such tragic events.

Most of us advocate a stronger and more effective United Nations: a practical and results-oriented organization with less bureaucracy and a new ethics based on a human-centred strategic vision of what development is. However pertinent our reservations and criticisms may be with regard to the present situation, the United Nations has an indisputable record of achievements over its 60 years of existence. That fact should not be overlooked, and I would like to pay a tribute to the United Nations for its success in promoting acceptable norms and standards governing international relations and in confronting problems affecting humankind.

In a changing, challenging and often unpredictable world, where the task of protecting national interests is becoming incredibly complex, the United Nations Charter continues to give us the particular sense of common direction we need in order to adjust our priorities and continue to think globally.

Development is indeed a multifaceted process leading towards real growth and access to skills, technologies, markets, financing and other related areas. We welcome and commend the important decisions and commitments of the Group of Eight Summit at Gleneagles in those areas, in particular those aimed at increasing resources for development assistance and the fight against pandemic diseases, as well as debt cancellation.

At the International Meeting held in Mauritius in January this year, leaders of small island developing States mapped out a joint-action plan on a range of long-term challenges, from global warming to international trade and sustainable development. A coordinated relationship between economic development and sustainable development was emphasized. Sustainable development is not just an environmental issue but one that goes to the heart of all forms of development and must be considered within the whole planning process, including a financial and development framework. In that context, the efforts of countries that have reached middle-income status should be recognized and acknowledged. It is imperative that those countries be firmly supported to help them manage the next phase of their development.

The developed world's diminished, or non-existent, interest in such countries is by nature unfair, especially when those countries have been left with no other choice but to borrow heavily in order to preserve the assets of their social development. Moreover, the middle-income status of many small island developing States camouflages the extent of their vulnerability. I wish to voice my strong concern about the loss of trade preferences for some of our countries, as well as the adverse impact that will have on our export capabilities. We therefore call on developed countries to seriously take this issue in consideration at the forthcoming meeting of the World Trade Organization in Hong Kong.

For that reason, small economies — and in particular those of small island developing States — turn to the United Nations to request that it act as a fully fledged decision maker in economic affairs, contributing to a new world order in which more consideration is given to the specificities and vulnerabilities of small island developing States.

Safety and security are also prerequisites to any strategy or action plan focusing on sustainable development. Seychelles strongly supports the adoption of the comprehensive convention on terrorism. We all realize the importance of developing

domestic counter-terrorism capabilities, and we call for more assistance and cooperation in that field. With that concern in mind, as well as from a more general standpoint, we hope that, in the near future, our subregional cooperation grouping, the Indian Ocean Commission, will obtain observer status at the United Nations.

Seychelles agrees that the resolution on a strengthened and revitalized General Assembly is timely. We also agree that its central role as the chief deliberative policymaking and representative body of the United Nations needs to be reasserted. At the same time, we are of the view that, however fundamental a matter, the reform of the United Nations should not distract our minds from the other pressing issues that are on our agenda, especially the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals as part of the fight against global poverty and for the attainment of dignity and happiness by men and women in all the countries of our world.

Let me reassure the Assembly that Seychelles strongly supports the draft declaration of this summit and strongly recommends its prompt implementation. We also wish to reaffirm our belief that the United Nations is an irreplaceable body essential for the conduct of international affairs in the only spirit that should guide such affairs, that of fairness, mutual respect and solidarity. It is in that spirit that we must work together to make our world safer and more prosperous.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Pierre Nkurunziza, President of the Republic of Burundi.

President Nkurunziza (*spoke in French*): I should first like to refer to the victims of the natural disaster that has just stricken the southern United States. We would like to reiterate our deepest sympathy to the Government and the entire people of the United States.

Allow us also to congratulate the Co-Chairpersons of the High-level Meeting, as well as the other members of the Bureau, on their election to preside over our deliberations.

In the Millennium Declaration, adopted five years ago, the leaders of the world sealed a universal pact for socio-economic development and the preservation of the rights and dignity of the human person. That universal pact has eight goals. The paths we have taken and the speed with which we are achieving those goals vary considerably from country to country. With regard to my country, the war that has upset Burundi for more than 10 years has prevented us from achieving all the goals.

There have, of course, been delays, but not all is lost. We continue to hope to achieve most of the goals by 2015. The people of Burundi have demonstrated their overwhelming willingness to turn fully the page on the war and commit themselves to reconstruction and development.

It is in this new context of greater security and greater legitimacy that the Government of Burundi has made a commitment to a strategy to combat poverty. We know that we will be able to count on the assistance of the international community.

We are pleased that Burundi has benefited from debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. But because of the situation prevailing in Burundi, we call for total debt relief.

As for the goal of ensuring universal primary education, during our investiture as President we took the decision to provide free primary education to all school-age children, starting in 2005-2006. For the 2006-2007 school year, we are planning to construct at least one primary school in every settlement. This means building 800 classrooms in 2006 and means recruiting 2,000 new teachers and acquiring teaching materials at an estimated cost of US$ 15 million.

As for the goal of gender equality, our Government has made some substantial progress. Women now exercise great responsibilities in the conduct of the affairs of our country. Women occupy 35 per cent of the positions in public institutions, including significant positions such as that of speaker of the National Assembly and two vice-presidencies in the Senate. On the cabinet level, the second Vice-Presidency of the Republic is held by a woman.

Moreover, of the 20 ministries, seven are run by women, including the Ministry of Foreign Relations and the Ministry of Justice. Finally, women have made considerable inroads in local administration, where several posts of governor and local community administrator have been given to women.

In terms of health, much remains to be done. Our Government has made a commitment to develop a

policy to improve significantly access to health-care services for all, as well as to pursue implementation of a national strategic plan to combat HIV/AIDS with one of the key aspects being the strengthening of capacities for the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS.

Another major concern of our Government is to ensure a sustainable environment in a country where more than 90 per cent of households use wood as their sole source of fuel. There is, therefore, strong pressure on our natural resources and subsequent degradation of the environment. Nonetheless, it is possible to achieve the initial Millennium Goals.

With respect to peace and security within Burundi and the subregion, we are pleased to note that peace reigns throughout almost all of Burundi. At the regional level, we are pleased with the efforts made to promote peace, stability and sustainable development in the African Great Lakes Region.

We are following very closely and actively participating in the preparatory activities for the international conference on the Great Lakes Region, which will be held in the near future in Nairobi.

The questions of security, social stability and combating poverty are closely interrelated. We must break the vicious cycle of conflict and poverty. We need to walk on both feet and provide both concrete and rapid peace dividends to the disadvantaged and vulnerable populations who have been repatriated, displaced, demobilized or unemployed, in order to deprive those opposed to the peace process of a nest of malcontents to draw from.

But at the same time, we need to integrate those disadvantaged groups into a wide-ranging programme of rehabilitation and economic recovery, access to land, employment, health services, etc.

We must quickly improve social conditions so as to increase opportunities for implementing the Millennium Development Goals.

The support of the entire population for the peace process and the programme of economic development is what we need. The international community is a stakeholder in this new situation. For this reason, we urgently call on the international community to ensure that the level and quality of their commitments in the post-conflict period are adapted to the new expectations and new political situation.

There is no doubt that the international community will increase the volume and quality of its assistance so as to meet the impatient expectations of a people that has chosen peace and democratic change.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Hu Jintao, President of the People's Republic of China.

President Hu Jintao (*spoke in Chinese*): At this solemn and important moment, national leaders and representatives from around the world are gathered here to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. The founding of the United Nations was an epoch-making event in human history.

During the past 60 years, the United Nations has played an important role and made enormous achievements in maintaining world peace, promoting common development and advancing human progress.

The new century has opened up a bright prospect for the development of mankind. In this period of historical importance wherein opportunities and challenges exist side by side, countries can truly bring about a harmonious world with lasting peace and common prosperity only when they rally closely together.

Let me share with you a few observations in this regard.

First, we must cultivate a new concept of security featuring mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation and build a fair and effective mechanism of collective security.

We should encourage and support efforts to settle peacefully international disputes and conflicts and step up cooperation in a resolute fight against terrorism.

The United Nations, as the core of the collective security mechanism, must play an enhanced, rather than a weakened, role in this regard.

Secondly, the United Nations should take concrete measures to implement the Millennium Development Goals, particularly in the area of accelerating the growth of the developing countries, so that the twenty-first century can truly become a century of development for all.

We should work actively to establish and improve a multilateral trading system that is open, fair and non-

discriminatory, and further improve the international financial regime.

We should step up worldwide energy dialogue and cooperation and jointly maintain energy security and energy market stability. We should actively promote and protect human rights, and ensure the enjoyment by all of equal opportunity and rights to all-round development. The developed countries should shoulder a greater responsibility for the achievement of universal, coordinated and balanced development in the world.

Thirdly, we should respect every country's right to independently choose its own social system and path of development, and encourage countries to seek revitalization and development in line with their national conditions. We should endeavour to preserve the diversity of civilizations in a spirit of equality and openness, enhance inter-civilization dialogue and exchanges and join efforts to build a harmonious world where all civilizations co-exist and accommodate each other.

Fourthly, we should carry out rational and necessary reform to maintain the authority of the United Nations, improve its efficacy and strengthen its capacity to take on new threats and new challenges. United Nations reform is all-dimensional and multifaceted. Greater United Nations commitment to the question of development should be a priority of the reform. The reform of the Security Council should aim, as a priority, to increase the representation of the developing countries, African countries in particular, so that more countries, especially small and medium-sized countries, can participate in the decision-making of the Security Council.

I wish to reiterate here that China will continue to hold high the banner of peace, development and cooperation and unswervingly follow the path of peaceful development. We will, as always, integrate our development with the common progress of humanity. China's development, rather than hurting or threatening anyone, can only serve peace, stability and common prosperity in the world. Let us join hands and work together to build a harmonious world with lasting peace and common prosperity.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Cesare Antonio Gasperoni, Captain Regent on behalf of the Most Excellent Captain Regent, of the Republic of San Marino.

Mr. Gasperoni (*spoke in Italian; English text provided by the delegation*): Having identified and established, five years ago, in this very Hall, the main goals to be achieved at the beginning of the twenty-first century, we now gather again to discuss and decide how to reach them. Undoubtedly, the success of this five-year-old process — or its failure — depends on us alone.

The challenges of the Millennium Declaration, contained in the Secretary-General's report entitled "In larger freedom", are transnational in nature and trans-institutional in terms of possible solutions.

We are gathered here because we are aware that those challenges cannot be addressed individually by each country. Indeed, close cooperation among Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations representing all sectors of civil society is essential.

In that spirit, the Republic of San Marino — characterized by an age-old tradition of freedom, democracy, peace and solidarity — has always upheld multilateralism, moved by the conviction that in the modern world there are no frontiers capable of stopping both positive and negative events. We are all potential victims of scourges such as AIDS, environmental degradation, organized crime, terrorism and underdevelopment. International cooperation is the only means we have to address and defeat today's destructive dynamics.

It is our opinion, today more than ever, that the world needs multilateralism. The United Nations is its best expression. Globalization, in its most positive meaning, understood as a sharing of technologies, resources and development, can guarantee fair and balanced economic growth, particularly for poor countries.

Sadly, the development brought by globalization has so far touched only a fragment of the world's population, while the rest of humanity has experienced only its most negative impacts. The final result is a wider gap between the rich and the poor.

In such circumstances, we cannot but support the introduction of mechanisms to bring the benefits of globalization to all. Until this objective of equality has been achieved, we should give our full support to

proposals inviting developed countries to assist and aid developing ones.

We commend, in this regard, the decision taken by the Group of Eight last July to increase financial aid and cancel the debt of 18 of the world's poorest States.

The Republic of San Marino is intensifying its cooperation and humanitarian assistance, within the possibilities of a micro-State, to eradicate poverty and guarantee adequate development for all peoples, in line with the Millennium Declaration.

One has only to glance at the report on the Millennium Development Goals to see that we are still far from achieving the targets established five years ago and that the fight against poverty is still an ethical, social, political and economic imperative.

It is unacceptable that, at the beginning of the third millennium, hundreds of millions of human beings are still suffering from hunger. Indeed, while extreme poverty has been reduced in Asia, the situation has worsened in Africa, especially in the sub-Saharan region. In that region in particular, the fight against HIV/AIDS by the international community must be intensified.

It is unacceptable that every year about 11 million children, that is to say 30,000 a day, die before the age of five because of malnutrition or lack of basic health care, and that more than 115 million children still cannot benefit from guaranteed access to primary education.

Against such a backdrop, a greater, more responsible commitment by the international community is needed to guarantee that all human beings and peoples enjoy fundamental rights and dignity, as an essential prerequisite for peacebuilding.

To that end, we believe that this summit must establish the guidelines for our respective States to take increasingly effective and meaningful action.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Pedro Verona Rodrigues Pires, President of the Republic of Cape Verde.

President Rodrigues Pires (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by delegation*): As I see it, we who were once colonized have reason enough to celebrate, with hope, the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations. Indeed, based upon its founding principles and inspired by its fundamental values, we have succeeded in prevailing over foreign domination and crafting sovereign States that have today become full-fledged actors in international society. It has been an arduous and painful process, but a necessary one. Had the United Nations not sanctioned and legitimized our aspirations, it would, without question, have been more painful, and taken far longer.

Perhaps the United Nations has not attained all the goals and purposes assigned to it, as has often been reported. However, we are indebted to it. Its inestimable contribution to liberty, solidarity and closer ties between peoples, nations, men and women is beyond question.

For those and other reasons, I consider it imperative for the international community to give priority to perfecting and consolidating our universal Organization and its institutions. Better global, democratic, participatory and effective governance will thereby be ensured, making for greater human security, which will lead in turn to sustainable development.

Today we live in an interdependent and indivisible world. That is why we must build a world community of shared responsibilities, values and benefits. It is also recognized that the world is now at a crossroads, marked by the progressive widening of the gap between the richest countries and the poorest. Yet, another more balanced and less unequal world is possible, in view of our material and technological resources and the enormous potential that humankind and the planet possess.

It was from that perspective that the Millennium Development Goals were set five years ago to fight poverty, hunger, disease and illiteracy. Those Goals, while being timely and ambitious, are also humanist and generous. We can see, however, that to attain those Goals by 2015 as planned, much remains to be done, and intensified efforts will have to be exerted by both the contributing and beneficiary countries. Those efforts will be rewarded by social balance and well-being, which are factors of security that humankind sorely needs. It thus becomes urgent to create an environment likely to promote economic development for the poorest countries. Moreover, as the fifteenth *Human Development Report* recognizes, unjust trade policies continue to prevent millions of people in the poorest countries around the world from emerging

from poverty, thus preserving obscene inequalities that, if truth be told, are morally unacceptable.

Here, at the beginning of this century, the deadliest pandemic, HIV/AIDS, is a wake-up call to us all. It is essential that we combat HIV/AIDS resolutely, pooling the resources required for treating it and for promoting research to discover a vaccine, through joint action among States and the business and scientific communities. This is yet another realm where unequal opportunity makes itself tragically felt. Beyond that, we must not ignore how intertwined it is with poverty, which cuts a wide swath through the world's population.

Natural phenomena also highlight the risks incurred when we neglect to preserve nature.

Today's world has spawned threats that, for the security of us all, must be neutralized in time — in particular, faceless international terrorism. Eliminating terrorism requires determination and a global, comprehensive and coordinated strategy, integrating responsibility for and participation by all States, large and small. For that matter, we are all responsible for one another's security, as the report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (A/59/565) acknowledges. Worldwide, effective and participatory governance, based on international law and democratic cooperation among countries, is what can best help to resolve the complex problems confronting humankind today.

It has been generous and visionary ideas that have made the world move. Thus, in the face of all challenges, we must build a future based on the moral foundation of universal values and established know-how — the achievement of all humanity. Among those values, human dignity and the dignity of peoples stand out as being incompatible with hunger, want and ignorance. Those are values that cannot fully flower in a world that does not promote inclusion, respect for culture diversity, equal opportunity for progress and the well-being of all, and fundamental human rights based on liberty, equality and human solidarity.

Finally, I hope that, notwithstanding their complexity and the contradictions inherent therein, we do manage to carry out the reforms our universal Organization calls for and shoulder the commitments that will make it possible to attain, on schedule, the Millennium Development Goals, embodying such enormous hope for the most disadvantaged of this world.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Mikheil Saakashvili, President of Georgia.

President Saakashvili: It is my privilege to address this institution today and to share with you how we as an international community of responsible nations can do more to advance development, eradicate poverty, and establish greater security and stability, both at home and around the world. For the past 60 years, the United Nations has been the leading international body responsible for advancing those ideals, and the establishment of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals represents a major step forward in that effort.

Today, 60 years after the founding of the United Nations, 60 years after Yalta, we must change the United Nations in order to solve our most pressing problems, including poverty, a healthy environment and, most of all, lasting security. It is not an easy mandate, and for countries like Georgia these issues, and in particular the need to reform, strengthen and improve the United Nations, are of particular importance.

Since our Rose Revolution two years ago, Georgia has made great strides towards reducing social inequality, strengthening human rights, caring for the sick and vulnerable and promoting sustainable development — all important elements of the MDGs. In fact, during the short time that we have been in power, we have made progress towards nearly every Goal.

The economy is improving. Indeed, a recent World Bank survey put Georgia among the leading three countries in terms of business climate and the speed and efficiency of the reform process. Those results are a tribute to the strength of the Georgian people and a direct result of what a democracy can achieve when it is responsible, transparent and accountable. Yet despite the notable progress we have made, the situation in Georgia today is not ideal. We have more work to do if we hope to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

Georgia's democratic and economic development is constrained today due to unresolved conflicts on our territory. Hundreds of thousands of refugees from

Abkhazia and from South Ossetia remain unable to return to their homes or to enjoy the fundamental rights of freedom and safe movement.

In Abkhazia, hundreds of thousands of people were forcibly evicted from their homes, kicked out in a mass expulsion and act of ethnic cleansing. Georgia will never accept the results of ethnic cleansing anywhere in the world, and any arguments attempting to legitimize its results are immoral and set dangerous precedents for the future. In fact, even as we speak, before the very eyes of the world and of the United Nations monitors, the homes those people lived in and from which they have been thrown out are being sold out from under them. What is most shocking is that, in many cases, high-ranking Government officials from a neighbouring country are buying those houses, while the world says and does nothing about it.

Not only is Georgia's development affected by those lawless territories — which have become dangerous black holes and havens for criminals, traffickers in human beings, drug smugglers, terrorists, and other sources of criminal threat — but those areas also endanger international stability. Those threats can no longer be ignored or wished away.

Our Government is firmly committed to peacefully settling those conflicts and to the peaceful establishment of full control over our internationally recognized territorial integrity. We believe that the nineteenth-century logic of territorial seizures and acquisitions no longer applies today. Rather, the message of ethnic inclusiveness, tolerance, integration and strong safeguards in the area of human rights is much stronger than that of tanks, war planes other forms of military might.

We are committed to improving the lives of our citizens, regardless of religion, ethnic origin or place of residence. In short, we are committed to the establishment of a Georgia that is peaceful, democratic, free and whole. We are pushing for peace by advancing comprehensive peace plans in South Ossetia and in Abkhazia, where we are actively moving forward with our initiatives.

We have introduced affirmative action plans aimed at the educational and career advancement of minority representatives. We are very proud of those plans. They are efficient, they are working, and Georgia has become a nation-State that efficiently integrates people of all ethnic origins and confessions. That is one of my main sources of pride at this moment.

We also hope that the Russian Federation will cooperate with us in a constructive and positive way so as to leave behind the conflicts we inherited from the imperial past and from post-Soviet lawlessness.

But in order to combat the threats posed by instability, we need an international community and a United Nations that can do much more than just talk about solutions; we need a United Nations that can bring them about. That means a United Nations that can resolve conflicts — a United Nations that does not simply look on as international law is violated but instead puts an end to the ongoing process of the forcible, lawless and immoral annexation of the territory of Abkhazia.

That is why Georgia is so committed to the idea of making the United Nations a stronger institution and to reforming it so that it can meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

The issue of conflict resolution in my country and around the world must take higher priority at the United Nations. More needs to be done through, and more boldness shown by, bodies such as the Security Council, the Economic and Social Commission, the Human Rights Commission and other United Nations agencies if we hope to overcome one of greatest causes of human poverty.

Specifically, we must support more transparent decision-making and make the Security Council a much more representative body. We must support the strengthening and transformation of the Human Rights Commission so that it can more effectively monitor and act on human rights abuses.

We must support a greater role for intervention in favour of peacebuilding, especially in areas affected by unresolved conflicts, as well as the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission with a mandate to focus on conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation, including economic assistance. We must do our best to stop human rights violations on a mass scale and to put an end to a climate that allows, tolerates and indulges such human rights violations, no matter what principles are used to justify them.

The stakes today could not be higher. One need only look around the world to see the tremendous destruction and violence that conflict breeds on a daily

basis. We can also see the devastation and destruction caused by natural disasters.

If there is one single priority that can unite the international community, it must be a global commitment to peace and security. Far from being the singular concern of Georgia, it is a responsibility that all leaders share with respect to present and future generations.

Looking to the future, I want to sound a note of optimism — optimism because I believe in the power of this great institution and because I come from a region with tremendous potential, where, following the demise of that evil empire, the Soviet Union, so much change and development has taken place and is still taking place today. Dynamic leaders and new democratic movements are emerging — proof of the positive impact of democracy, and making the case for accountable and transparent governance.

A wave of freedom is spreading, and nothing can stop it. Democracy is on the rise in our region. So, too, are development and prosperity, but both require security and stability in order to be permanent. For that, we need a stronger and more efficient United Nations.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by The Honourable Ludwig Scotty, M.P., President of the Republic of Nauru.

President Scotty: The Republic of Nauru congratulates Mr. Jan Eliasson on his election and welcomes him. We are fully confident that he will conduct the affairs of the General Assembly effectively and efficiently.

Nauru wishes also to congratulate the outgoing President, Mr. Jean Ping, for having courageously and successfully risen to the many challenges that this high office demands.

Sixty years ago, the United Nations was created by humankind to serve the human race. Today the United Nations family has grown to a total of 191 diverse Member States, all bound by the common purpose of providing for the well-being and dignity of humankind and ensuring equal rights for all persons and for all nations.

Indeed, Nauru is proud to be a Member of the United Nations, and I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate each and every Member State, as well as the Secretariat, for the many achievements and the progress made in upholding the four pillars of the United Nations, namely peace, security, development and human rights.

At the same time, I wish to remind all that we cannot become complacent but must remain vigilant and true in our efforts to ensure the collective security and well-being of our people. For there is a long way to go yet, and the responsibilities that face us in this new millennium are much more challenging and complex.

Through the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, leaders reaffirmed their commitment to promoting sustainable development and global prosperity for all. While there have been positive growth and achievements in some countries, others, particularly underdeveloped countries and small island developing States such as Nauru, have not been so successful. Indeed, my country continues to reap the political, social and economic turmoil resulting from the years of poor leadership and mismanagement.

Although my Government is strongly committed to sustainable development and has begun to strengthen governance, combat corruption and put in place responsible legislation to uphold the rule of law and ensure transparency, I will readily admit that Nauru requires urgent assistance to recover and stabilize its economy. Hence, we welcome the early implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, which recognizes and addresses the special needs and vulnerabilities of small island developing States such as ours. That includes establishing a United Nations presence in my country, Nauru, and other small Pacific States to assist in development needs, including the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

We urge development partners and international financial institutions to understand our dire need. We call on developed countries to meet their responsibilities and rise to the challenge of devoting 0.7 per cent of gross national product to official development assistance, as reaffirmed in the 2002 Monterrey Consensus. We implore the developed countries to provide that assistance, which will eventually enable underdeveloped countries to become self-sustainable and improve the standard of living of many.

Nauru cannot stress enough its desire for peace and security. Nauru also recognizes that there can be no true peace or security without the protection and the promotion of all human rights, the rule of law and democracy. Hence, we cannot continue to turn a blind eye to the welfare of the 23 million people who live on the island of Taiwan. We should encourage peaceful dialogue to resolve the issue of the Taiwan Strait, which affects the peace and the security not only of the Asian Pacific region but also of the rest of the world.

Nauru also acknowledges that in today's ever-changing and globalized world, there are many serious threats to international security and peace. Those threats require not only our urgent and collective action but also a more concerted and determined response. Thus, we need to strengthen the United Nations so that it can meet the full range of challenges of our time. In that respect, we welcome the creation of a Human Rights Council and support the expansion of the Security Council to include the permanent membership of Germany, India, Japan and Brazil. Furthermore, we applaud the ongoing reform measures carried out by the Secretary-General in order to make the United Nations system more effective and efficient and to do so with the tightest deadline possible.

Allow me to conclude by posing a question for us all. How much longer can we continue to reaffirm and renew our commitments to our people before their hopes for development, peace, security and human rights are realized? Proverbs teaches us that, "Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain" (*The Holy Bible, Proverbs 25:14*).

We, the leaders of this world, have been called on at this time to revisit past commitments and ensure that they are implemented. Let us put a stop to false hopes and empty promises and, by matching our words with action, bring rain showers of blessings to our world and its people.

May God bless the United Nations in these deliberations for a better tomorrow for the peoples of this Earth. We shall progress in God's will first.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Denis Sassou Nguesso, President of the Republic of the Congo.

President Sassou Nguesso (*spoke in French*): Five years ago, on the occasion of the Millennium Summit, we committed ourselves to joining forces to defeat poverty. That universal rallying around the Development Goals remains an event of unmatched scope which has given us hope for a possible victory over poverty. The Monterrey Summit has strengthened that hope by defining financing for development mechanisms based on a favourably considered partnership between rich countries and poor countries.

Today, while significant progress in the global fight against poverty can be noted, any optimism is tempered by the delays in Africa in particular, where many countries struggle to keep up with the global pace.

It is clear that without a significant increase of financial resources, the Goals will not be achieved by the deadlines established.

That is why it is extremely encouraging to note all initiatives announced or undertaken throughout the world to make progress on some of the most difficult issues, such as official development assistance and debt. In particular, we are thinking of the timetable adopted by the European Union to achieve the target of allocating 0.7 per cent of gross national product to official development assistance, the decisions of the recent Group of Eight Summit in Scotland, and all other proposals, including those of President Jacques Chirac, President Lula da Silva and Prime Minister Tony Blair, insofar as they aim to create a reliable and predictable international financing mechanism. Those very encouraging initiatives should be supported and enhanced. Only immediate and collective action will make it possible for us to prevent new threats and confront existing ones — terrorism in particular — which find fertile ground in marginalized societies and individuals and in the persistence of extreme poverty. Furthermore, recent natural disasters are a tragic reminder that the world is one in its vulnerability and that the time has come to act collectively and in solidarity. Thus, we must make a commitment to collective action to better protect the environment. For its part, Congo reaffirms its will to pursue efforts to carry out Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, whose realization depends largely on creating a truly global partnership. The recent Brazzaville summit on the Congo basin was part of that effort.

With regard to Central Africa and the African Great Lakes region, I would like to tell the Assembly

that our subregion, today as perhaps never before, is determined to work for conflict prevention and the peaceful settlement of disputes and for peacebuilding, which remains a potent factor for development.

In that context, we wish once again to appeal to the international community for increased support to the countries of the Great Lakes region, which should be declared a special development and reconstruction zone.

The commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations should be a solemn occasion, a time to take bold decisions, particularly with respect to United Nations reform and the revitalization of multilateralism. We are concerned that any delay in that process might lead to deadlock in the future, which could pose great risks.

However, our hopes will be in vain unless we bear in mind the imperative of peace and security — the bedrock that will enable us to withstand threats such as terrorism, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, the arms race and weapons of mass destruction. Peace, security, development, human dignity, the environment, institutional reform of the United Nations: these have been the main themes of our debates over the past few months.

Since we have not yet completed our negotiations on those crucial questions, let us at least set up some guideposts that can point the way to future discussions. My country in particular, and Africa in general, have nothing to gain from inertia. We believe in moving forward with expectancy. That is the only way in which we will be able to safeguard our common heritage in the face of the numerous perils that lie ahead. Let us take action while we still have time.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Nambar Enkhbayar, President of Mongolia.

President Enkhbayar: This unprecedented gathering of world leaders is a historic opportunity to meet the expectations of millions around the globe to live free from fear and want, to live in greater dignity and larger freedom. It demonstrates yet again our strong commitment to the world Organization and to collective action in pursuit of our common goals.

For all its faults, the United Nations has proved indispensable. It has prevented wars and fed the hungry. It has ended colonialism and helped nations to develop. The United Nations is our common house, common cause and common future. This Organization is a precious gift bequeathed to us by a generation that in its folly brought our world to the brink of extinction and in a time of deepest despair found the courage and wisdom to unite in its resolve to create a safer, more prosperous and just place. We have been given a chance to make this vision a reality, and we have an obligation to deliver it.

Effective multilateralism, with the United Nations at its heart, should guide our effort. We need a system of international relations that is truly democratic and representative of all, based on respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter. In order to be effective, multilateralism needs adequate capacity and the willingness to act.

We need to build a more prosperous world, in which poverty is excluded and development is axiomatic. We need to build a safer world, in which terror is defeated, deadly weapons do not fall into the wrong hands and technology is used for the betterment of human life. We need to build a just world that does not turn a blind eye to the plight and suffering of its inhabitants, but ensures that rules are respected and rights are enjoyed. We need a world of larger freedom and greater dignity.

To achieve our goal, we need an agenda tailored to our needs and United Nations reform that can advance it. Five years ago, in the Millennium Declaration, world leaders agreed on a wide-ranging set of commitments and undertakings — a comprehensive agenda for development. The accord reached there on development was, indeed, momentous. We must ensure that it is achieved.

We in Mongolia are deeply committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The parliament of Mongolia adopted, last April, a specific resolution endorsing the Goals at the national level. The resolution entrusted the relevant State entities with the implementation and monitoring of the MDGs, and provided for the allocation of necessary resources in annual State budgets. An additional goal 9, on strengthening human rights and fostering democratic governance, was proclaimed.

Despite its primary importance, national action alone could prove insufficient. The implementation of the MDGs in many developing countries is handicapped by significant capacity constraints. The

support of the international community is much needed there. Therefore, the development of a global partnership between developed and developing countries, as reaffirmed by the Monterrey Consensus, ought to become a reality.

Despite an encouraging shift in the increase of official development assistance (ODA) over the past couple of years after a decade of steady decline, the world is still well short of achieving the longstanding target of 0.7 per cent. Here, I wish to endorse the recommendation of the Secretary-General that, starting in 2005, developing countries that put forward sound, transparent and accountable national strategies should receive a sufficient increase in aid, of sufficient quality and arriving with sufficient speed, to enable them to achieve their MDGs. In addition, new and innovative sources of financing, including the International Finance Facility, and debt-conversion for the implementation of MDG projects should be strongly encouraged.

The time has come for bold decisions. The time has come for comprehensive solutions. Sufficient political will ought to be exercised to forge a genuine partnership in order to erase the staggering discrepancy between the commitments made and the actions to be taken. We cannot afford to fail to honour our commitments if we are serious about implementing the Millennium Development Goals. Those two processes — achieving the MDGs worldwide and reforming the United Nations — ought to go in tandem, and a strengthened and revitalized United Nations should serve as an important precondition.

We need to enhance the United Nations capacity to coordinate and guide global responses comprehensively, that is, in all three of its pillars: development, security and human rights and democracy. Every reform portfolio is of equal importance. No issue can be held hostage to any other. Our outcome document is an important basis for decisive action. The process has been set in motion. The sixtieth session of the Assembly must yield results so as to ensure smooth implementation. The success of the reform will not be measured against our words. It will be measured by whether the renewed United Nations can bring development home to the poor, peace to the warring and justice to the abused. It will be measured against our actions. Let us rise to that challenge, especially as we observe the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations.

Anniversaries provoke recollections over the past and projections for the future. As we in Mongolia prepare to celebrate the eight-hundredth anniversary of the Mongolian State in 2006, we look back to the rich legacy of the Mongolian State to draw lessons for the future. An astute Statesman, Chinggis Khaan, transformed once and for all the face of the Eurasian continent, bringing together East and West. He also introduced free trade, religious tolerance and postal and communications systems. He established many important fundamentals of statecraft — liberal taxation, sound administrative and management systems and equality before the law — and safeguarded diplomatic immunities. Even today, those attributes of statecraft and principles of inter-State conduct have not yet become a universal reality. I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere hope that the countries of the world will join us in our celebration next year.

In conclusion, may I express my confidence that this summit will inspire and guide us to collectively work towards a safer, more equitable and prosperous future in the years to come. Mongolia stands ready to shoulder its responsibilities in that noble collective endeavour.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Thabo Mbeki, President of the Republic of South Africa.

President Mbeki: In the year 2000 we took advantage of the beginning of a new millennium to solemnly commit ourselves to the Millennium Declaration, which led to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and the proposals for the reform of the United Nations. We have gathered here five years later in a millennium-review summit, both to assess the progress we have made towards the achievement of the Goals we set ourselves and to take any necessary additional decisions to help all humankind move forward faster towards the realization of those Goals.

It would therefore seem quite obvious that we should ask ourselves two fundamental questions. One of them is: What has the review told us about the last five years? The second is: What decisions have we therefore taken in the light of the conclusions brought to light by that review?

One of the facts that stands out sharply in the review is that, in truth, we have not made the decisive progress we thought we would make with regard to the

critical issue of the reform of the United Nations. We have therefore had no choice but to postpone to a later date the decisions we should have made.

The only saving grace with regard to that miserable performance is that as it closed, the fifty-ninth General Assembly reaffirmed our commitment to

> "strengthen the United Nations with a view to enhancing its authority and efficiency, as well as its capacity to address effectively ... the full range of challenges of our time." (*resolution 59/314, para. 146*)

Yet another fact that stands out sharply in the review is that our approach to the challenge to commit and deploy the necessary resources for the realization of the Millennium Development Goals has been half-hearted, timid and tepid. In that regard, and illustrative of that reality, the draft outcome document honestly states that Africa is "the only continent not on track to meet any of the goals of the Millennium Declaration by 2015" (*ibid., para. 68*). And yet, precisely because of the enormous and unique challenge it posed, the Millennium Declaration had included a specific section entitled "Meeting the special needs of Africa".

The draft outcome document correctly says that

> "We therefore reaffirm our commitment to work towards a security consensus based on the recognition that many threats are interlinked, that development, peace, security and human rights are mutually reinforcing, that no State can best protect itself by acting entirely alone and that all States need an effective and efficient collective security system, pursuant to the purposes and principles of the Charter." (*ibid., para. 72*)

We firmly believe that the reason we have not made the progress we should have during the last five years is precisely because we have not as yet achieved what the draft outcome document described as a security consensus. We have not achieved that security consensus because of the widely disparate conditions of existence and interests among the Member States of the United Nations, as well as the gross imbalance of power that defines the relationship among Member States.

It is for the poor of the world, whose interests are best served by real and genuine respect for the fundamental proposition, that we need the security consensus identified by the draft outcome document. The actions of the rich and powerful strongly suggest that they are not in the least convinced that that security consensus would serve their interests. Thus they use their power to perpetuate the power imbalance in the ordering of global affairs. As a consequence of that, we have not made the progress in the reform of the United Nations that we should have. Because of that, we have not achieved the required scale of resource transfers from those who have those resources in order to empower the poor of the world to extricate themselves from their misery. Simply put, that means that the logic of the use of power is the reinforcement of the might of the powerful, and therefore the perpetuation of the disempowerment of the powerless.

That is the poisonous mixture that has given us the outcome that will issue from this millennium review summit to the peoples of the world. We should not be surprised when those billions of people do not acclaim us as heroes and heroines. We will be able to drape ourselves in the clothes of heroes and heroines only by ensuring that, by the time the sixtieth session of the General Assembly concludes, the billions we represent will have just cause to say that we did indeed act to ensure the full implementation of the Millennium Declaration.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of the Republic of India.

Mr. Singh (India): I bring the best wishes and felicitations of the people of India to the General Assembly as it meets during its historic sixtieth session. India has a special regard for the United Nations. The ideals of the United Nations run parallel to our own civilizational ethos. This is the ancient Indian concept of *vasudhaiva kutumbakam*, which means that the whole world is one family. It was that idea of a shared destiny that, five years ago, encouraged the Assembly to adopt the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

May I take this opportunity to convey our deep condolences and sympathies to the Government and people of the United States on the widespread destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina.

At the turn of the century there was a growing recognition of the fact that the contemporary challenges of pandemic disease, environmental degradation and terrorism demanded a global response.

At the same time, there was a new sense of hope and optimism. The world community welcomed advances in science and technology that made it possible to confront those challenges as never before. We had confidence in mobilizing the collective will and wisdom of nations to herald a new era of peace and prosperity.

Five years later we find that the international community is generous in setting goals but parsimonious in pursuing them. We must therefore make greater efforts to mobilize the needed resources to meet the Millennium Development Goals. That would be a wise investment for the future. Failure will only make our task in the future more difficult and more costly.

We in the developing world face a dual challenge, namely, the domestic one of managing political, economic and social change in an environment of rising expectations and growing disparities, and that of securing an international environment conducive to our developmental aspirations. Those challenges are interlinked. Success or failure will affect us all.

We welcome the agreement reached on the draft outcome document to be adopted tomorrow. It is a roadmap for the work ahead to re-orient the Organization to meet the challenges of the present. India will be a willing participant in that process.

All of us assembled here recognize that the United Nations is in need of urgent and comprehensive reform. The management of global interdependence requires strong international institutions and a rules-based multilateral system. The reform of the United Nations must be based on that principle. It must include the expansion of the Security Council in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership. Unfortunately, the United Nations suffers from a democracy deficit. Its structure and decision-making process reflect the world of 1945, not the world of 2005. Unless the United Nations becomes more representative of the contemporary world and more relevant to our concerns and aspirations, its ability to deliver on the Millennium Development Goals, and indeed on its Charter obligations, will remain limited.

In a democracy it is the rule of law and transparency that safeguard the interests of the ordinary citizen. At the global level too, we need to ensure that multilateral rules governing the flow of goods, services and capital take adequate account of the needs and aspirations of developing countries. The world awaits a "new deal" to spur development and create jobs on a global scale. It must address the challenge of eradicating mass poverty and pandemics like HIV/AIDS and other deadly communicable diseases. We need collective thinking and coordinated action to deal with the challenge of ensuring energy security, even while we address the consequences of climate change. We must turn the global outpouring of sympathy and mobilization of resources in response to national disasters into a more sustained effort to deal with seemingly less dramatic, but in the long run more damaging, crises. We must renew our effort to secure the world against nuclear proliferation and to promote global, non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament. Failure to address in a timely fashion the global challenges that I have mentioned can only serve to turn them eventually into unmitigated disasters.

Democratic governance, both within nations and in our global institutions, also constitutes a powerful weapon in meeting the global scourge of terrorism. We must not yield any space to terrorism. We must firmly reject any notion that there is any cause that justifies it. No cause could ever justify the indiscriminate killing of innocent men, women and children. For several years, India has faced cross-border terrorism directed against its unity and territorial integrity. We shall never succumb to, or compromise with, terror in Jammu and Kashmir, or elsewhere.

In 1947, India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, said that "Peace has been said to be indivisible; so is freedom, so is prosperity, and so also is disaster in this one world that can no longer be split into isolated fragments". Today those words assume a compelling logic. In this one world there is only one United Nations. If we fail the United Nations, we will fail succeeding generations, who will expect a more enlightened legacy than is currently in sight.

Globalization offers exciting opportunities to improve living standards worldwide, provided that the weak and the powerless are empowered to become genuine partners in progress. The world community must therefore muster the courage to harness the potential of globalization for the benefit of all humankind.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Meles

Zenawi, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

Mr. Zenawi (Ethiopia): I am very pleased to be here for this important event, which has enormous significance in terms of the challenges we face in promoting development and peace, ensuring good governance and fostering respect for human rights. Coming, as it does, five years after the historic commitment that we jointly made when we adopted the Millennium Declaration, this gathering affords us an opportunity to rededicate ourselves to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

I would like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General, for the historic initiative he took five years ago and for the follow-up work that has been done. We are very grateful also for the very dedicated and invaluable work that has been carried out by Professor Jeffrey Sachs and his colleagues at the Millennium Project.

In addition, let me take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General and, through him, the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change for the ground-breaking report (A/59/565) that served as a basis for the report of the Secretary-General entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005), which I find to be very commendable, with vital suggestions for United Nations reform.

I should also pay tribute to Foreign Minister Jean Ping, President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, for all his efforts during this important period in the life of the United Nations and for the draft outcome document (A/60/L.1), which, I have no doubt, will facilitate businesslike deliberations at this High-level Plenary Meeting.

Five years ago, we embarked on a 15-year-long historic journey with reasonably high hopes. With one third of the journey completed, it has become clear that without additional joint effort on the part of all, it will be impossible for low-income and least developed countries such as Ethiopia to achieve the MDGs, particularly to defeat extreme poverty — poverty that kills.

On the other hand, the past five years have in fact shown that even for countries such as Ethiopia, most of the MDGs are demonstrably achievable. The MDGs are emphatically not unattainable goals with unrealistic targets. In fact, in our particular case, for example, the fight against poverty in all its dimensions, with clear commitment and on the basis of a clearly defined strategy, antedates the articulation of the MDGs. Therefore, what was needed in our case was to align our strategy for combating poverty and achieving sustainable development with the MDGs, which, we are convinced, are far from being excessively ambitious.

Indeed, our experience over the past five years has demonstrated that with the optimum mobilization of domestic resources and the requisite international support, in conformity with commitments made, countries such as Ethiopia can, with little doubt, achieve the MDGs. There is no doubt, however, that countries such as Ethiopia require effective international cooperation consistent with the commitments set out in the Millennium Declaration and at Monterrey, which is essential if they are to be able to be on track to achieve the MDGs.

Although it is obvious that the primary responsibility for achieving the MDGs belongs to the countries concerned, it is also the obligation of partners to make it possible for the low-income countries that have demonstrated the readiness to carry out their responsibilities to overcome the poverty trap. In that regard, the report of the Millennium Project contains valuable proposals whose implementation would undoubtedly ensure the achievement of the MDGs long before 2015. Official development assistance, debt relief and trade-related issues need to be aligned with the MDGs so that low-income countries can achieve the MDG-based targets.

I am very pleased at the progress made at the Gleneagles Summit of the Group of Eight. I also welcome the progress made here, at the United Nations summit, on building consensus in the fight against poverty. However, I am deeply concerned that we sometimes seem to move backward on our commitments, as appears to be happening with the full cancellation of the debt of the highly indebted poor countries. I believe we must avoid backtracking, move beyond the reiteration of consensus positions and start acting on them in earnest. I am disappointed that we have not made more progress on the other issues before us. Like other speakers before me, however, I am reassured that we have made some progress and have charted a clear course for making additional progress.

Let me close by reiterating Ethiopia's commitment to achieving the MDGs and to doing whatever is necessary to contribute to successful United Nations reform.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): Before we continue, I should like to ask that members be as quiet as possible, particularly in the area outside the Hall. Please keep conversations to a minimum, out of respect for the speakers.

The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency The Honourable Mr. Denzil Llewellyn Douglas, Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, Sustainable Development, Information and Technology, Tourism, Culture and Sports of Saint Kitts and Nevis.

Mr. Douglas (Saint Kitts and Nevis): Five years ago, world leaders boldly agreed on a blueprint to eradicate poverty, to achieve universal primary education, to promote gender equality and empower women, to reduce child mortality and improve maternal health, to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and related diseases, to ensure environmental sustainability and to develop a global partnership for development. Those goals remain fundamental to our own ability to improve the human condition and transform our societies. Although it may indeed be necessary to rationalize modalities for arriving at the goals, their achievement should not be negotiable. Social justice and the obligations of development are a sine qua non of any progressive civilization.

Five years on, we must ask ourselves: what, if anything, can be held up as the results of our stewardship? Unfortunately, I still hear the usual excuses. But, in addition, I hear a chorus of discontent with the United Nations, drowning out the mournful voices of the impoverished, the marginalized and the diseased and dying, who, sadly, seem not to be getting the chance they so rightly deserve.

I hear old excuses that have been repackaged in new forms, but their ultimate objective is identical with the old intention to unravel the consensus that previously stimulated action towards the Millennium Development Goals. It is providential that we are reviewing the Millennium Development Goals and examining the question of reform of the United Nations while commemorating the anniversary of its sixtieth year. I join the call for strategic reforms of the United Nations, which my Government has been making for the past decade. We have repeatedly asked the United Nations to enhance its role in development and to be more responsive to and cognizant of the needs of the many, and not merely to remain an instrument of the few.

The United Nations — six decades later — must change. But we must inspire that change for the better. Change must flow from the changes in the realities of our times. But to urge change simply so as to enable the current system to work better for only a few will not strengthen the role and credibility of the United Nations, but will instead ultimately weaken this international Organization.

We must address change in the make-up of the Security Council and effect change in the business-as-usual attitude in the General Assembly, the Human Rights Commission and the Economic and Social Council.

We should not allow allegation of defects in the institutional structure of the Organization to challenge or discredit areas where progress is being made. The United Nations must become responsive to its wider membership and must mean something to citizens of the world. Inasmuch as small countries like St. Kitts and Nevis need to see progress on the Millennium Development Goals and reform of the United Nations, my Government has been making incremental steps at home. In St. Kitts and Nevis, primary and secondary education are compulsory and free. We continue to provide school meals, uniforms, textbooks, and access to information technology to those who are less fortunate, so that they may not be left behind. For my Government, the right to development is as much a moral and human issue as it is a political duty for me as a political leader.

On the question of HIV/AIDS, St. Kitts and Nevis, along with its sister countries of the Caribbean Community, has formed the Pan-Caribbean Partnership (PANCA). It is a mechanism through which the region has successfully developed and implemented a regional strategy to fight HIV/AIDS, to eliminate stigmatization and discriminatory practices, to provide treatment and care and to negotiate reduced costs for medicine for those who suffer from this affliction. I emphasize today that PANCA has been mentioned by the United Nations as a best practice model in the fight against HIV/AIDS. In this regard, we welcome the recent commitment of

the Republic of China, Taiwan, to contribute to the Pan-Caribbean Partnership, as part of its own clear demonstration of support of the Caribbean's fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic, despite Taiwan's exclusion from the World Health Assembly and this body.

Our Ministry of Gender and Social Development continues to work to protect the rights of youth and the elderly and to empower women, so that their valuable input and expertise can inform the process of governance and development.

This year, St. Kitts and Nevis, which has depended on sugar production for its foreign exchange and economic survival for over 350 years, took the difficult and painful decision and the necessary steps towards abandoning sugar production. This decision became necessary despite the claim that globalization and free markets are supposed to spread prosperity far and wide. The reality is that countries with larger labour forces and countries with greater factors of production and great wealth still rationalize granting subsidies to their farmers and impose barriers that either limit or deny access to their own markets. The tremendous social, psychological and economic costs of this decision are only now becoming apparent in St. Kitts and Nevis.

We would like to see greater debt relief for heavily indebted countries, and we were encouraged by the declaration of the Group of Eight Summit of July this year. The interests of the poor nations would also be better served if developed countries would adopt fairer trade policies, which are informed by capacity restraints and grant special and differential treatment to weak or smaller economies. In addition to this insidious creeping economic problem, the almost daily escalation of oil prices threatens to further undermine the fragile economic base of countries such as mine.

We have taken steps to diversify our economy and to retrain sectors of the population in order to meet the challenges of the changing world. But poor countries seem to have to play by a different set of rules. Nevertheless, the Government and people of St. Kitts and Nevis are making meaningful strides towards achieving some of the Millennium Goals.

However, in some areas we still need help. The policies of some countries unwittingly undermine our efforts to achieve these specific goals. At the heart of the debate on reforming the United Nations is the underlying notion that the United Nations should have greater power to intervene in failed States. Yet there is no corresponding effort to empower the United Nations to assist States that are undergoing dramatic economic dislocations, social inequities and political difficulties. There is a danger of a self-fulfilling prophecy, namely, that problems lead to failed States.

We can have another five years of hollow debates. We can make empty promises or excuses as to why no action is being taken in many critical areas. Or we can resolve to move forward by recommitting to do what is right and what is in the best interests of the collective agenda of this Organization.

I know on which side of history my country, St. Kitts and Nevis, will eventually stand.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Samdech Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Royal Government of Cambodia.

Mr. Hun Sen (*spoke in Cambodian; interpretation provided by the delegation*): The excellent report, "In larger freedom", by His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary-General, and his colleagues, provides a global vision and proposals for us to build human solidarity together through a more just and civilized world. Our actions today will determine the destiny of humanity and our planet.

Cambodia has turned a new page in its history, putting firmly behind it the darkness and tragedies of the recent past, and has emerged into the new dawn of its future. Democracy now has strong roots, public order and the rule of law have made steady and tangible progress, human rights are fully protected and spectacular economic growth is manifestly evident. We have also made significant advances towards reaching Cambodia's Millennium Development Goals (MDG), especially in the education sector and in combating HIV/AIDS. However, we know that in the area of socio-economic development the road ahead is longer and more arduous than the road we have travelled thus far. At present, the Royal Government of Cambodia is actively preparing its national strategic development plan for the period 2006-2010, which will determine Cambodia's milestones on the way to achieving the MDGs by 2015.

Allow me to raise some issues related to the future of our fragile world in the twenty-first century.

First, with regard to freedom from want, we fully share the Secretary-General's analysis of the interlinkages between human rights, the rule of law, democracy, security and development. We should therefore work on all fronts at the same time. Unless all the interdependent causes are advanced, none can succeed.

Development issues should remain at the heart of the international community's attention. Strong political will is a prerequisite to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. A global partnership between rich and poor countries should be based on mutual respect and trust, shared responsibilities and transparency. Aid-providing nations and institutions must move rapidly to make a reality of the rhetoric of the Paris and Rome Declarations: they must extend strict and resolute support of the receiving nations' full ownership of both the process and the priorities of socio-economic progress. Politically driven hidden agendas and shifting ideologies to exert coercive influence on recipients must end; they serve only to punish the poor. In fact, while that trend is declining, there is an increase in the number of conditions linked to aid.

Most of the aid has reached those in real need, a large amount of it having been spent on technical assistance and studies and also on some sectors that are not consistent with the development priorities of recipient countries. Aid has been made conditional on the requirements of donors. In the end, most aid money has ended up benefiting the economies of donor countries or consultants from other countries, even though they were incompetent or did not know the recipient countries. At the same time, developing countries should take steps to carry out reforms, especially in the areas of domestic revenue mobilization, strengthened governance and the fight against corruption.

We welcome the decision of G-8 nations to write off the debt of 18 highly indebted poor countries in the amount of $40 billion. However, that is merely a rescue effort rather than a solution. Successful development requires increased net transfers of resources for real investments in poor countries in the form of grants, which are decreasing from year to year. Moreover, modalities should be flexible in order to enable poor countries to use loans to implement projects that are of great benefit to their national economies and that have the capacity to generate high domestic revenue while not affecting their repayment capacity and macroeconomic development. We also need to move rapidly away from producing volumes of paper reports to providing relief or development assistance to the poor. The Monterrey spirit and the commitment to increase official development assistance to 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product must be translated into reality. A fair trading system between developed and poor countries must be established so that poor countries can fully realize their own potential and maximize their comparative advantages for growth.

We welcome the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development to achieve reproductive health services globally before 2015. In the context of ensuring sound environmental governance, Cambodia welcomes the promulgation of the Kyoto Protocol aimed at stabilizing the emission of greenhouse gases.

Secondly, with regard to freedom from fear, terrorism constitutes a serious threat to all progress. It not only wipes out gains and sets back the clock, but the diversion of scarce resources in order to counter it means fewer available funds to meet development challenges and so ensure a better tomorrow for all. As we take strong measures to combat and curtail terrorism, we should at the same time address its root causes. We should put an end to the conditions that terrorists have exploited. We should remove the frustrations of the poor and excluded people of our planet, restore dignity to those who have lost it and ensure that dialogue and cooperation prevail between civilizations, cultures and religions. In essence, the goal should be to lead a balanced and tolerant life, at peace with oneself, and in harmony with one's neighbours, with other beings, with nature and with the cosmos.

In closing, I would like to reiterate that the challenges of our time require political actions born of intelligence, courage and heart. Cambodia stands ready to join in the global effort that will lead us down the path of development, security and freedom.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency The Honourable Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, Prime

Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Independent State of Samoa.

Mr. Malielegaoi (Samoa): Five years ago, at the dawn of the new millennium, we leaders boldly declared a shared commitment to stronger global efforts to ensure that all people have a right to live in dignity, free from want and fear. Those were not just visionary goals or mere aspirations: they were basic human needs achievable within our lifetime. Our optimism was rooted in a culture of shared responsibility and in a belief in man's decency. After all, as members of the global family, we share triumphs and tragedies, hopes and setbacks; and our interests are mutually interdependent.

This is a historic occasion and a unique opportunity. We come together for an honest self-appraisal of our performance over the past five years. Our task is not to lament lost opportunities, pass judgement on the performance of some of our fellow Members or blame others for our failures. No, we come together to reflect on the past, take stock of the present and move forward in unity of purpose.

We must rise above the dictates of narrow interests and work to benefit from the diverse perspectives of our membership. Name-calling and intransigent positions have no place in our review. Instead, we shall recommit ourselves in both deeds and words to honouring the letter and spirit of the Millennium Declaration.

The verdict is out. The review has revealed some successes but also some unmet expectations. There is understandable panic and anxiety in some quarters, just as there is reason for guarded optimism that the Millennium Declaration will be implemented in full. Let us remember that there is no universal prescription or magic formula for inducing a desirable outcome for all Member States if countries are not willing to put their own house in order first.

Samoa believes in the Millennium Declaration and its global commitments aimed at enhancing the future of humanity in the twenty-first century. The eight Millennium Development Goals that resulted from the Declaration are practical and time-bound benchmarks needed to track our progress in the critical implementation phase.

In order to realize the Goals, we have adopted an integrative approach through our national development strategy, which incorporates other international protocols. Some Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), such as the goal on health, have been localized to reflect Samoa's immediate concerns and priorities.

As part of our commitment to the Millennium Declaration, earlier this year we submitted our progress report on the Millennium Development Goals. We have also presented our consolidated report to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Our report on the status of the Rights of the Child has been completed and will be submitted to the United Nations in the next few days.

My Government remains confident that most of the Goals will be met within the proposed time frame. However, challenges remain and they are being addressed through policy and legislative initiatives and the creation of innovative partnerships with the donor community and civil society.

But Samoa cannot manage alone. Achieving the Goals will not be easy without the support of our development partners. Sustainable development requires sustained effort and commitment. Partnerships with the donor community require mutual trust and understanding.

As a small island developing State (SIDS) and a least developed country (LDC), Samoa reaffirms the continuing validity of the Mauritius Strategy and the Brussels Programme of Action as the comprehensive approaches for meeting the specific threats and challenges faced by those groups of countries. But adopting programmes of action without adding resources to complement Members' efforts could easily blunt the drive of the States to meet the challenges of poverty reduction.

In recent times, the world has witnessed outbreaks of the most devastating natural disasters, unprecedented in the 60-year history of our Organization. Tsunamis, hurricanes, earthquakes and floods have resulted in the loss of countless lives and in untold sorrow and suffering. Those extreme events demonstrate the awesome power of nature. But the international community's overwhelming response in helping the victims attests to the immense depth of human compassion. My own country has endeavoured, within its limited resources, to contribute what it can in support of those efforts.

Changes in global climate patterns and the frequency of extreme weather events have increased the threat of natural disasters. Natural disasters do not discriminate between rich and poor countries. Yet those most affected by the immediate consequences of climate change are usually the vulnerable and the marginalized. Paradoxically, the majority of them make no direct contribution to the causes of climate change.

Small island developing States' have real and urgent concerns for their continued survival in the face of the effects of climate change. We appeal for a change of heart among those with the capacity to make a difference and for them to heed our plea and take bold action to address this imminent threat.

World leaders, in their reflective wisdom, reaffirmed their faith in a strengthened and reformed United Nations, a vital multilateral institution able to respond effectively and ably to the challenges of the twenty-first century and to deliver on the Millennium Declaration.

Samoa supports enlarging both membership categories of the Security Council in order to reflect contemporary geopolitical realities. There remains a compelling case for democracy and transparency in the Council's procedures and working methods in order to facilitate a more engaged and effective relationship with the General Assembly. The Assembly, on the other hand, must work hard to regain the world's confidence in its status as the highest deliberative and representative decision-making body of the Organization.

Meaningful management reforms must include the Secretariat. Its accountability and management structures should be realigned to reflect its mandate and today's realties, making it more effective and responsive. The Secretary-General should be given the necessary flexibility and resources to lead a strengthened United Nations, in exchange for greater transparency and accountability.

Recognizing that development, security and human rights constitute the three pillars of the United Nations, Samoa supports the creation of a Human Rights Council. It is hoped that elevating the status of human rights within the United Nations hierarchy will give the Council greater visibility and status and thus enhance the promotion and the protection of human rights.

The proposal to establish a Peacebuilding Commission within the United Nations system to give greater support to States emerging from post-conflict situations and moving towards recovery and reintegration is another positive aspect of the overall reform which we support and which we hope will materialize soon.

As the current Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum, Samoa supports a stronger, more formalized relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations. A Pacific Plan to be approved by the Pacific Islands Forum later this year establishes the framework for strengthening regional and national capacities to pursue the Millennium Development Goals targets. A key pillar in attaining the goals of the Pacific Plan is cooperation with the United Nations through mutually beneficial partnerships with regional organizations of the Pacific.

Samoa places great faith in international law and justice and the vital protection that the law offers all States, especially the weak and the small. We therefore welcome the entry-into-force of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the important work in which it is currently engaged as part of its contribution to securing a more just and peaceful world.

The outcome document of our summit meeting will provide an agreed road map to hasten the attainment of the MDGs and to implement the reform programme for a revitalized United Nations.

We know that actions inevitably lag behind commitments made, but we take heart from experience that, despite setbacks, we still make progress when we manage to work cooperatively. This is why our coming together as the United Nations remains so vital to the future of our world.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): Before calling on the next speaker, I should just like to remind delegates of the importance of the length of their statements. As members have noticed, several speakers will now have to speak during the normal lunch break because of the very long speeches that are being delivered. I ask all speakers to exercise maximum restraint and to shorten their speeches. The written texts can always be made available, and that would make it possible for others to speak within the normal schedule.

The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency The Honourable Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius.

Mr. Ramgoolam (Mauritius): We agreed to meet this year to reflect on the progress made in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the related outcomes of other global conferences and meetings. My delegation notes with satisfaction that, after long and protracted negotiations, United Nations Members have been able to achieve broad-based consensus, not only on the review of the Millennium Declaration, but also on a wide-ranging reform of the Organization to adapt it better to present and future challenges.

The proposals in the outcome document lay the foundation for creating a supportive and enabling international environment for social and economic development in our countries, notably through an increase in official development assistance (ODA) and the establishment of timetables for achievement of the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) for ODA by 2015, together with initiatives to enhance the quality of aid and its impact.

My delegation commends the Group of Eight for highlighting the need for Africa to have access to additional resources. The specific recommendations with respect to Africa in the outcome document, if properly implemented, will mean faster progress by Africa towards meeting the MDGs.

My delegation also welcomes the recent proposals of the G-8 that have now led to the cancellation of the outstanding debt of heavily indebted poor countries. As it is an indubitable fact that debt sustainability is crucial to the achievement of national economic development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, there is also an urgent need for the Bretton Woods institutions to develop a debt sustainability framework for low-income countries, as well as middle-income countries.

I am pleased to note that the specific measures to address the special needs of the least developed countries, the landlocked developing countries and the small island developing States have been taken on board in the outcome document and a commitment made to promote greater international cooperation and partnership for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.

While these are all very welcome proposals, my delegation believes that much more will have to be done if we are to sustain our development. That is why I believe emphasis should be placed on promoting trade as an engine for growth and development. My delegation wishes to underscore the need for increased opportunities for developing countries, particularly small island States, and their integration in the global market system. The need for a fair international environment that maximizes development gains of developing countries in the context of trade liberalization cannot be overemphasized.

Yet, recent developments have been particularly hostile to developing countries. In fact, some of our countries, including my own, are facing not only a sharp erosion of traditional and historical preferences based on supply arrangements with the European Union, but also fierce competition and new barriers to trade our products. At the same time, we are being asked to liberalize our markets for the benefit of foreign companies. Should this trend go unchecked, a large number of developing countries and a number of middle-income countries would face serious difficulties. It is extremely important to allow the developing countries, including the most vulnerable ones, to trade on a level playing field.

Yesterday, United States President Bush made a call for the successful conclusion of the Doha development round so as to promote prosperity and opportunity for all nations. We fully support his call.

We are also pleased with the emphasis placed on environmental sustainability and on the urgent necessity to undertake global action to mitigate the effects of climate change. We wish to reiterate the call for urgent action to arrest the emission of CFC gases, which experts say have already reached dangerous levels. While we welcome the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol, we believe it imperative that all countries subscribe to the Protocol as soon as possible. What is now required is for us to develop a more inclusive international framework on climate change beyond the expiration of the Kyoto Protocol in 2012. Climate change is no longer a distant possibility; it is happening now; and, unfortunately, it is the countries that are least responsible for emitting these gases that are suffering the most.

Recent natural disasters, such as the 26 December Tsunami and Hurricane Katrina, triggered an unprecedented wave of solidarity around the world. My Government expresses its sympathy and solidarity with all the countries that suffered losses from those disasters.

But we must learn from these lessons. It is of paramount importance to invest in disaster risk reduction, and my delegation strongly believes that adequate funding must be provided in this area in order to enable the most vulnerable to be better prepared and build resilience against natural disasters.

In the same vein, we welcome efforts by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission to set up a global network of early warning systems across the world.

My delegation strongly supports the recommendation in the outcome document concerning terrorism, particularly the recommendation to reach agreement on a comprehensive international convention on terrorism. It is also important to address the root causes of terrorism. Mauritius has always been supportive of all initiatives designed to combat terrorism. I am pleased to say that yesterday Mauritius signed the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

Mauritius equally endorses the principle of the "responsibility to protect" as a norm of collective action in cases of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

The Peacebuilding Commission will be an important interface between the Security Council, responsible for conflict prevention and management, and the Economic and Social Council, responsible for post-conflict reconstruction and development. Mauritius believes that the composition of the Peacebuilding Commission should be open enough to enable any country to participate that can contribute effectively to it.

We support the proposal for the establishment of a Human Rights Council to promote universal respect for the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. The proposed Human Rights Council should serve as a forum for constructive engagement on human rights and enhance the promotion of the highest standards of human rights through peer reviews and exchange of good practices.

This session of the Assembly offers a unique opportunity for substantial reform of the United Nations system in its entirety. It is our hope that, as we undertake these wide-ranging reforms, a solution could also be found to the issue of Security Council reform. My delegation considers it imperative that, in an expanded Security Council, Africa should find its rightful place, with representation both in the permanent and the non-permanent category, and that India, the world's largest democracy and also a developing country, should serve as a permanent member of the Council.

We view the reform process in terms of the imperative of enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations, with a view to promoting transparency and accountability as principles of good governance at the national and international levels. We must also see to it that the United Nations internalizes and applies these core principles within the Secretariat.

Let me conclude by reaffirming the commitment of Mauritius to the principles the United Nations, which represents the highest level of multilateralism and in which the voices of all States, big and small, can be heard. This system of multilateralism has evolved on the twin pillars of a body of the most up-to-date international law, a corpus of norms and standards governing international relations and a framework of commonly shared values.

It is incumbent on the leaders of the world to enhance the image of the United Nations and endow it with the means to face the myriad of challenges we face, in a spirit of fairness, justice and interdependence and with the common objective of the good of humanity. Let that be our commitment and our legacy to future generations.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency The Right Honourable Pakalitha Bethuel Mosisili, Prime Minister and Minister for Defence and Public Service of the Kingdom of Lesotho.

Mr. Mosisili (Lesotho): At the outset, allow me to express our deepest sympathy and heartfelt condolences to the Government and the people of the United States of America as they go through tribulations in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the resulting massive loss of life and property.

This High-level Plenary Meeting provides an opportunity for introspection, following the commitments made at the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields, including the historic Millennium Summit. In my delegation's view, virtue has to command and, indeed, underpin our deliberations.

At the Millennium Summit, we were confident that the goals and the targets we set were achievable. Yet, hardly five years later, the scourge of HIV and AIDS — the spread of which we undertook to halt and reverse by 2015 — has been widely identified as a unique and unprecedented threat to international development. It undermines the hope of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. It continues to erode and wreck the lives of millions, particularly in Africa. Hence, my delegation sincerely hopes that the Meeting will give HIV and AIDS the same level of attention and concern as it does global security.

These circumstances compel us to reiterate our plea to the international community to urgently adopt an expanded and comprehensive response to HIV and AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other diseases. Such a comprehensive response would complement individual countries' concerted efforts to halt the rapid spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

In the field of education, in 1999 Lesotho adopted a sequential strategy of introducing free primary education beginning in grade one and in 2005 launched the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) eSchools demonstration project. However, we regretfully recognize that the efficiency of those strategies is undermined by a shortage of teachers due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the high drop-out rate of those, particularly girls, who have to take of parents bedridden with AIDS and related diseases.

Our target of reducing the mortality rate among children under five by two thirds by 2015 is being compromised by the impact of HIV and AIDS. Preventable diseases also threaten the lives of children under five. In the same vein, the target of reducing the maternal mortality ratio by three quarters seems to be eluding us. Our efforts and resources in those two health areas must be doubled to achieve the goals set.

Five years ago, the Millennium Summit placed the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger at the top of the list of the MDGs. Unfortunately, however, the goal of eradication of extreme poverty remains elusive for many countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Government of Lesotho is doing its utmost to rise above those challenges. It has, inter alia, adopted the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and in July 2004, it voluntarily acceded to the African Peer Review Mechanism.

The prospect of further growth of slums and informal settlements in major cities threatens developing countries. That calls for a comprehensive aid and development services programme, which can and must assist the urban poor by providing basic household utilities.

With respect to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, the Government of Lesotho, in collaboration with all stakeholders, initiated a gender and development policy in 2001. The policy addresses various development issues that impede women's full and active participation in development as equal partners and beneficiaries.

Developed countries have to unconditionally abide by the commitments they made at all the major United Nations conferences in the economic, social and related fields and at other international conferences held to address the special needs of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.

Furthermore, Member States have to rededicate themselves to protecting the vulnerable and meeting the special needs of Africa. We have to face the truth. Countries such as Lesotho that in 2005 face a combination of challenges, including the rampant spread of HIV and AIDS, extreme poverty, food insecurity and a heavy debt burden, will not be able to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 unless sufficient and rapid assistance — particularly in terms of resources — is extended to them.

The stark reality is that least developed countries such as Lesotho urgently need resources to achieve those laudable and worthy goals.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I thank the Prime Minister and Minister for Defence and Public Service of the Kingdom of Lesotho for his thoughtfulness in shortening his speech and having made its text available to members for reading.

The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey.

Mr. Erdoğan (Turkey) (*spoke in Turkish; English text provided by the delegation*): I consider it a source of great happiness to address members in this Hall, which represents our hopes for a better world. Five years ago, at the start of the new century, we expressed our will to carry the founding ideals of the United Nations into the new century.

The United Nations was built as the house of peace for humanity, which lay battered in the ruins of a great war. In the period since them, humanity, unfortunately, has continued to experience great suffering and has seen great destruction. Indeed, compared with the periods of war, poverty and tears, periods of peace constitute a very small part of our history.

The United Nations was founded so as to turn the tide in favour of peace and prosperity. It is for that reason that we must continue to strengthen the United Nations and seek solutions to the human suffering that we face today.

I consider the constantly increasing gap in income distribution between the North and the South, as well as the arms race, to be the greatest obstacles to the well-being and prosperity of nations.

Poverty, disease, environmental degradation and terrorism, which have been sources of threat and concern for humankind in every period of its history, are becoming ever more threatening. Today, the reality is that, regardless of where they occur or whom they affect, all of them have ramifications on a global scale. Thus they pose problems for every single one of us — and the main reason for that is globalization. We cannot shut our eyes and ears to those problems just because they are physically far from us. Thus, without losing further time, we must jointly seek ways to globalize peace instead of war, prosperity instead of poverty, conscience instead of greed, and rights and freedoms instead of oppression and violence. With the United Nations at the forefront, we must reconstruct our international institutions accordingly. We should be in no doubt that our common future will depend on that.

The culture of conflict, which has become a global plague in itself, is in my view one of our priority concerns. Let us once again remember the acts of terrorism that struck New York, Istanbul, Madrid, London, Sharm el-Sheikh, Beslan and Baghdad. Bitter experience has taught us all that terrorism is the enemy of humankind.

We must give serious consideration to how we can help those who live in poverty; those do not receive a sufficient share of the benefits of globalization; those who are unable to benefit from democracy and freedom; those who cannot keep up with the rapid pace of change in our world; and those who are, unfortunately, trapped in a cycle of conflict and destruction.

It is clear that it will become more difficult for us to stand on our own feet if we do not stand by those in need. It would, indeed, be a mistake to continue to present different traditions and cultures as sources of conflict, despite the many experiences that we have been through and the ruinous conflicts that have cost the lives of millions of people.

Together with my Spanish counterpart, Mr. Rodríguez Zapatero, I launched the Alliance of Civilizations initiative on the basis of that understanding. The Secretary-General, who shares our beliefs, has shown great sensitivity in supporting and participating in that effort.

The draft outcome document (A/60/L.1), which reflects the conclusions of the Secretary-General's report, will be an important step by the international community towards fulfilling its commitments under the Millennium Development Goals. It is our sincere desire that those commitments, which are defined in the outcome document, and the necessary structural reforms, will be implemented during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. Indeed, the main reason for announcing our candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for 2009-2010, is so that we can make a contribution to the achievement of global peace and welfare.

A United Nations that renews itself, that is more democratic and transparent, that has the ability to represent the joint will of all Member States, that is the source of solutions to international conflicts, that is seen as the guarantor of global peace, that is respected by all Members and that is more active and foresighted, is in the common interest of all of humanity.

I congratulate Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his efforts in that direction. Turkey continues to hope for and aspire to a better world. On that note, I would like to warmly thank all participants.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Jiří Paroubek, Prime Minister of the Czech Republic.

Mr. Paroubek (Czech Republic): As my country fully endorses the statement delivered here yesterday by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom on behalf of the European Union (EU), I would like to share with the Assembly just a few additional observations and comments.

Five years ago, world leaders here in New York agreed on a set of targets, which, if they are met, could make the world better and more fair. The following year — after the terrorist attacks on New York and other United States targets — our agenda grew. Combating terrorism, which was mentioned only marginally in the Millennium Declaration, has become one of our top priorities. At the same time, it has become obvious that the various goals and priorities of the United Nations are more interconnected than ever. There can be no question about whether this summit should deal with development or with security; it must tackle both.

The wide gap between the rich and the poor countries cannot be closed in a short period of time. But the differences must be diminished, and the Millennium Development Goals must be achieved. When assessing our progress in meeting them so far, referring to statistics and tables is not very helpful. What matters is the fact that, even in this century, there are children dying from starvation in many parts of the world. Dealing with this shameful situation is a moral imperative to which everybody, both rich and poor, without exception, must be committed.

The Czech Republic vows to accept its share of responsibility. The Czech Government has overcome the burden of the communist economic legacy and has succeeded in launching its national economy on a growth trend. Our accession to the EU further accelerated growth, as reflected in the country's key macroeconomic indicators. It is no mere coincidence that the Czech Republic is the largest donor among the 10 new EU member States. Czech development assistance has more than doubled, and it will continue to grow.

The Czech Republic sees the United Nations as a key part of the system of multilateral cooperation. Therefore, we are deeply interested in improving its performance and strengthening its role. We are involved in United Nations peacekeeping missions. We will contribute to the United Nations Democracy Fund. We are active in the field of human rights. We are joining others in combating terrorism: just a few hours ago I attached my signature to the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. We hope that our commitment will help us win a seat on the Security Council for 2008-2009.

The United Nations is often accused of being slow and inefficient, and it is blamed for many failings. Nothing can change the fact, however, that it is we, the individual Member countries, who make the Organization what it is, with all its positives and negatives. It is first and foremost up to Member States to demonstrate their political will to reform the Organization and to make it more efficient in this challenging era of globalization.

This summit seems to be ready, after weeks of hard preparatory work, to adopt far-reaching decisions concerning development cooperation, financing for development, security, the fight against terrorism, the use of force, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, human rights and the promotion of democracy, not to mention institutional adjustments. I believe that we are on the right track and that this will be an important milestone in the reform process. The decisions of the summit must be realized without delay.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): I thank the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic for having limited his statement to five minutes.

The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Denmark.

Mr. Rasmussen (Denmark): We have committed ourselves to halve global poverty by 2015 and to achieve further ambitious goals during the next decade. The enormous progress achieved by market oriented economic reform in Asia and Latin America over the last decade proves that the eradication of poverty is not an impossible goal. But an extraordinary effort is required to give Africa the chance to succeed. We all have to do more and to do better: African Governments, rich countries and the United Nations.

First, Africa needs to overcome epidemic diseases. AIDS is a fully blown disaster in Africa. The combat against AIDS should be the world's absolute top priority. This is the area where every extra dollar of assistance will create the greatest benefits to society.

Secondly, Africa needs trade. Free trade is the most effective way to improve economic growth and fight poverty. When trade advances, poverty retreats. We must all work for a successful outcome of the World Trade Organization development round in Hong Kong in December. Rich countries must improve market access and dismantle trade distorting agricultural subsidies. Emerging economies must be ready to assume their fair share of responsibilities towards the poorest countries. And African countries should liberalize trade among themselves.

Thirdly, Africa needs peace. Without peace there can be no progress. The United Nations cannot impose peace on Africa. Africans themselves must prevent conflict and manage crisis. But we must help them to maintain fragile peace. That is why it is so important that we establish the Peacebuilding Commission.

Fourthly, Africa needs more aid. Without this, poverty ridden African societies cannot benefit from free trade and globalisation. That is why Denmark is the second largest contributor per capita to Africa. I urge all donor countries to strengthen their contributions to Africa.

And fifthly, Africa needs better governance. All our aid will come to nothing if countries are ruled by corrupt dictators. Only when aid and trade are linked to good policies can we lift people out of poverty. African Governments must do more to fight corruption, to ensure political liberty and economic freedom, to invest in health and education of their people, and to promote the rights of women.

The United Nations has a special obligation as the global watchdog against human rights abuses. Frankly, its performance has not been good enough. We owe it to the people of the Sudan, Zimbabwe and all others who suffers from oppression and abuse to agree on the establishment of a Human Rights Council that has real powers and whose members will undertake to abide by the highest human rights standards.

All good deeds start at home. In order to maintain its moral authority and play a role in this process, the United Nations needs to get its own house in order. Last week's report on the mismanagement of the oil-for-food programme pointed to several cases of severe misconduct and corruption. I am pleased that the Secretary-General has promised to take a hard look at these problems.

Together we can make poverty history. Let us do it.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency The Most Honourable Percival James Patterson, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of Jamaica.

Mr. Patterson (Jamaica): Five years ago, we adopted a Declaration revealing our vision for the shaping of international society in the new millennium. The record shows that the results have fallen far short of our expectations.

We have failed to meet the targets we set; poverty and infectious disease remain rampant; tensions from war and terrorism are straining the fabric of international security; the proliferation of weapons of all kinds generates fear and threatens domestic peace. The world has become more insecure. There is still too much instability and conflict. There is still too much hardship and suffering. Too many are being left behind in the march towards the Millennium Development Goals.

This summit must send a message of hope to the millions who are still living in misery. For this to happen, three things are paramount.

First, we must strengthen the global partnership. The principles are well established. Shared responsibility and mutual accountability constitute the basic foundation, but we must get the partnership to work and show concrete results.

Commitments solemnly given must be implemented. An adequate and predictable flow of resources and their effective utilization is the essence of the partnership between donors and recipients, based on the discharge of mutual obligations and on accountability. Such a partnership should be carried out without burdensome policy conditionalities, and institutional safeguards for good governance are required.

Secondly, this process should be complemented by action to eliminate inequities in the global system through positive adjustments in global economic policies, which will give developing countries a better

chance to benefit from access to markets, capital flows and more favourable terms in the transfer of technology.

Thirdly, reform in global economic governance can no longer be postponed. Reform should not be confined to this Organization but should be undertaken in all institutions within the system, particularly those involved in economic policymaking. The basic prescription for progress is equity, inclusiveness, accountability and democratic participation. The Bretton Woods institutions, whose decisions have such a profound impact on our lives, should be among the first candidates for reform. Such a reform is long overdue.

The summit document placed before us sets out a framework, but it falls short of what we sought to provide for a more substantive development agenda. It will, however, have to serve as a starting point, and it demands early action on our part.

A reform of United Nations institutions is undoubtedly necessary, but it is important that it be carefully designed to remedy the real deficiencies that exist and to strengthen multilateralism. The result should not be to entrench the world power structure and for the United Nations to become its instrument. The system must work for all of us.

The Security Council should be reformed in its structure and procedures to become more representative and to inspire greater confidence in its decisions. The Economic and Social Council should be strengthened and empowered to participate in global economic policymaking and enabled to provide effective coordination and to promote coherence. Reform should put an end to the excessive politicization and adversarial approaches which have discredited the operations of the Human Rights Commission.

Disarmament and arms control should remain a priority.

The draft outcome document of this summit is far from ideal, yet it represents a workable basis for the stronger United Nations we seek. It is really up to us, for the most important reform is not that of institutions and structures. It is the policies and actions of Member States which will determine our success or failure. It requires renunciation of inequitable and discriminatory policies and of the politics of intolerance and domination. It requires a commitment to cooperation, mutual respect and greater efforts to achieve our common interests.

To that end, Jamaica stands always ready to play its part.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Silvio Berlusconi, Prime Minister of the Italian Republic.

Mr. Berlusconi (Italy) (*spoke in Italian; English text provided by the delegation*): Our shared sadness with respect to the victims of the hurricane that struck the great country hosting the United Nations leads us to reflect on the principles underlying this Organization.

Who are we? The answer is inscribed in the Charter that established the Organization 60 years ago. We are "the peoples of the United Nations". We are the States, serving every human being. We have a duty towards every inhabitant of the planet, wherever human dignity is denied, wherever the exercise of fundamental rights is impeded, whenever natural disasters strike.

It is our duty to safeguard the freedom of all men and women and to ensure freedom from want, freedom from fear and freedom from oppression.

Freedom from want is our primary goal. It is the responsibility of the most developed and richer countries to provide support and resources for economic and social growth; it is the responsibility of developing countries to create conditions at home that will enable all citizens to reap the benefits of those resources.

In our discussions on poverty and development, we cannot ignore the problem of debt. Italy is at the forefront in the area of debt relief, having already cancelled the debts of many of the poorest countries and being in the process of cancelling yet others.

Another crucial front is the further liberalization of international trade and market access. Italy supports the efforts to ensure successful negotiations in the framework of the World Trade Organization. We cannot continue to leave entire populations on the margins of globalization. I think that we all are convinced that this is what is needed.

Freedom from fear is the second major goal. Terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction pose a serious threat to peace and security.

The success of negotiations in the framework of United Nations reform will also be measured by the Organization's ability to fight and eradicate these new global perils.

In that field, too, Italy is a leading promoter of a common strategy. Yesterday we signed the new International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. But this is not enough. We must oppose with all our means not only terrorists but also all those who support, protect and provide justifications for them by inciting acts of hatred and intolerance.

The United Nations must be in a position to respond courageously to the crises generated by conflicts. That is why the commitment of every country and international organization is so vital. Here, too, Italy is playing a leading role; we are among the most active participants in missions authorized by the Security Council. More than 40,000 Italian troops are deployed in peacekeeping and peace-enforcing operations — from the Balkans to Afghanistan, from Iraq to the Sudan.

To achieve these imperative and fundamental objectives, the United Nations must have new, more effective tools at its disposal. That is why Italy strongly supports the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and of the Human Rights Council. At the same time, I believe that new ways of thinking and a new vision of the international community's responsibilities are needed.

The reaffirmation of the principle of the "responsibility to protect" is a major achievement that responds to the shortcomings of recent years.

In that light, we need to strengthen the role of the United Nations in the promotion of democracy and freedom. That is why we commend the establishment of the Democracy Fund, to which we have assured our important financial contribution.

Finally, we must avoid impositions and the creation of divisions with respect to the question of Security Council reform. Together with the other countries that belong to the Uniting for Consensus movement, Italy has submitted a flexible proposal that provides for an increase in non-permanent seats only.

The Security Council will be stronger, more transparent and more in line with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations only if we enact a reform that enjoys the broadest possible consensus. This is the only way to foster the atmosphere of trust and cooperation which is needed to bring to a successful conclusion the reform of the United Nations as a whole.

Allow me to conclude by repeating the words I pronounced in this Hall two years ago, which are as relevant today as ever.

"In the Millennium Declaration we promised food, water, health and education to the greatest possible number of citizens. Now the democracies must commit themselves to providing, also and above all, the intangible goods from which the other, more tangible ones, spring, because without the prerequisites of freedom and democracy there can be no hope for lasting peace and development, nor can there be an ultimate defeat of the challenge of poverty." (*A/58/PV.7, p. 35*)

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (Kuwait): On behalf of His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, allow to express my greetings to this High-level Plenary Meeting as well as our best wishes for a successful outcome of this important and historic meeting. On behalf of His Highness the Amir and on behalf of the people and Government of Kuwait, allow me to express to the people and the Government of the United States of America our heartfelt sentiments of solidarity and sympathy during these tragic days of loss and stress in the wake of the catastrophic hurricane that struck three Southern states.

Allow me also to express to the people of Iraq our condolences for the many victims of the acts of terrorism that have struck at security and stability and which are impeding the work to reconstruct and rehabilitate brotherly Iraq.

This High-level Plenary Meeting, which has been convened to review and assess the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, coincides with the sixtieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations. It is an occasion, which is a cause for celebration; it is also an opportunity to renew our firm commitment and trust in this Organization.

Allow me to express our thanks to the Secretary-General for his valuable report submitted in preparation for this High-level Plenary Meeting. We thank all who assisted in preparing the Outcome Document set for endorsement by the General Assembly at the end of this meeting.

May I, therefore, appeal to this Assembly, which is now in session at the highest level of responsibility, to muster its resolve with a view to giving a genuine and tangible meaning to international coordination and cooperation. Our goal is to fill and narrow the gaps and overcome the problems that impede the realization of the Millennium Development Goals in all regions of the world, especially in Africa.

Kuwait believes that the development goals that the world aspires to attain by 2015 are not impossible. Indeed, they could be within reach, especially the eradication of poverty, hunger, the treatment of epidemics like HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, as well as the improvement of health and education conditions in our societies. We actually do note an encouraging number of success stories in many countries.

However, meeting our development objectives requires collective commitment to our common responsibilities, both as developing and developed nations. It also demands a conviction that economic and social development, openness and political participation are all critical factors in our joint endeavours to tackle the problems and challenges confronting us in the areas of peace and security as well as the long-standing threats that undermine world stability, such as protracted armed conflicts and unresolved regional problems, terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the violation of human rights. It is against this backdrop that Kuwait expresses the hope that security and stability will be established and maintained in Iraq and that a just and comprehensive solution will be achieved to the Palestinian question.

Kuwait welcomes the pledge made by a good number of developed countries to increase their official development assistance to developing countries in order to reach the level of 0.7 per cent of GNP, as agreed upon by the international community. We believe that this demonstrates a full recognition on their part of the fact that development is a crucial requirement in addressing the problems facing the developing world.

Kuwait also calls upon the developed countries to honour their previous commitments in offering aid and to consider substantial reduction in the debts owed by developing countries. Furthermore, we invite them to ease tariff restrictions that impede the flow of products from the developing countries to the markets of the developed nations and to set up a global partnership conducive to the creation of a free and balanced international trade and financial regime under the umbrella of the World Trade Organization.

Given Kuwait's keen commitment to meet its obligations under United Nations resolutions and international conventions with a view to accelerating the pace of development, and despite the fact that Kuwait is a developing country, yet all relevant development indicators show that Kuwait has indeed covered much ground in meeting its commitment to every Millennium Development Goal and is ahead of the timetable set by the United Nations.

Since the early days of our membership in 1963, the State of Kuwait has honoured its obligations under all international programmes in order to establish a global partnership for development. To that end, we have established the Kuwait Fund for Economic Development, putting in place a liberal facility for providing assistance to the developing and least-developed countries. Recipients of aid from the Fund now exceed 100 developing countries, and the aggregate volume of assistance exceeds $12 billion. Thus the official development assistance provided by Kuwait over the past years came to almost double the internationally agreed-upon percentage. This does not include the financial assistance by the people of Kuwait through civil society institutions and non-governmental organizations to nations in need.

To this end, Kuwait is gratified to reconfirm its commitment to provide development and financial aid to the developing countries.

Kuwait is also pleased to highlight a recent achievement in gender equality in the political field. Kuwaiti women can now exercise their right to vote and to run as candidates for election to the National Assembly Parliament. That was achieved on 16 May 2005, when the national election law was amended. This landmark achievement is a cause for pride. It has expanded the prospects for all women in Kuwait to

assume leadership positions and to participate directly in the decision-making process. Kuwaiti women have now become more effective partners in the overall national development process.

The progress we have made so far in Kuwait against the Millennium Development Goals benchmarks encourages us to enhance our capabilities to meet the challenges of development goals. At the same time, we realize that challenges remain in the environmental sector. This in itself requires massive efforts to develop and deploy effective mechanisms required to mitigate and, ideally, reverse the adverse impact on our environment.

In our pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals, we remain hopeful that the lessons drawn from past experience will be used in defining our immediate course of action and will allow us to live up to the challenges of the present. In the final analysis, it will be our collective wisdom and determination that will help us forge ahead in shaping a better future, for a life of freedom and dignity for future generations, a life that enjoys the rule of law and stability, a life governed by the values and principles of freedom, justice and equality among all peoples.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Ariel Sharon, Prime Minister of the State of Israel.

Mr. Sharon (Israel) (*spoke in Hebrew; English text provided by the delegation*): I have come here from Jerusalem, the capital of the Jewish people for over 3,000 years and the undivided and eternal capital of the State of Israel.

At the outset, I should like to express the profound feelings of empathy of the people of Israel for the American nation, and our sincere condolences to the families who have lost loved ones. I wish to encourage my friend, President George Bush, and the American people, in their determined efforts to assist the victims of the hurricane. The State of Israel, which the United States has stood beside at times of trial, is ready to extend any assistance at its disposal in that immense humanitarian mission.

I stand before the Assembly, at the gate of nations, as a Jew and a citizen of the free and sovereign State of Israel, the proud representative of an ancient people whose numbers are few but whose contribution to civilization and to the values of ethics, justice and faith surrounds the world and encompasses history.

The Jewish people have a long memory — a memory which united the exiles of Israel for thousands of years; a memory which has its origin in God's commandment to our forefather Abraham — "Go forth!" — and continued with the receiving of the Torah at the foot of Mount Sinai and the wanderings of the children of Israel in the desert, led by Moses on their journey to the promised land, the land of Israel.

I was born in the land of Israel, the son of pioneers — people who tilled the land and sought no fights — who did not come to Israel to dispossess its residents. If the circumstances had not demanded it, I would not have become a soldier, but rather a farmer and agriculturist. My first love was, and remains, manual labour: sowing and harvesting, looking after the pastures, the flock and the cattle.

As someone whose path of life led him to be a fighter and commander in all of Israel's wars, I reach out today to our Palestinian neighbours in a call for reconciliation and compromise to end the bloody conflict and embark on the path which leads to peace and understanding between our peoples. I view this as my calling and my primary mission for the coming years.

The land of Israel is precious to me, more precious than anything to us, the Jewish people. Relinquishing any part of our forefathers' legacy is heartbreaking and as difficult as the parting of the Red Sea. Every inch of land, every hill and valley, every stream and rock is saturated with Jewish history, replete with memories.

The continuity of the Jewish presence in the land of Israel never ceased. Even for those of us who were exiled from our land, against our will, to the ends of the earth — our souls remained, for all generations, connected to our homeland by thousands of hidden threads of yearning and love, expressed three times a day in prayer and songs of longing.

The land of Israel is the open Bible, the written testimony, the identity and right of the Jewish people. Under its skies, the prophets of Israel expressed their claims for social justice and their eternal vision for alliances between peoples in a world which would know no more war. Its cities, villages, vistas, ridges, deserts and plains preserve as loyal witnesses their

ancient Hebrew names. Page after page, our unique land is unfurled, and at its heart is united Jerusalem, the city of the Temple upon Mount Moriah, the axis of the life of the Jewish people throughout all generations and the seat of its yearnings and prayers for 3,000 years. It is the city to which we pledged an eternal vow of faithfulness which forever beats in every Jewish heart: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its cunning!"

I say these things because they are the essence of my Jewish consciousness and of my belief in the eternal and unimpeachable right of the people of Israel to the land of Israel. However, I say this here also to emphasize the immensity of the pain I feel deep in my heart at the recognition that we have to make concessions for the sake of peace between us and our Palestinian neighbours.

The right of the Jewish people to the land of Israel does not mean disregarding the rights of others in the land. The Palestinians will always be our neighbours. We respect them, and have no aspirations to rule over them. They are also entitled to freedom and to a national, sovereign existence in a State of their own.

This week, the last Israeli soldier left the Gaza Strip, and military law there was ended. The State of Israel proved that it is ready to make painful concessions in order to resolve the conflict with the Palestinians. The decision to disengage was very difficult for me and involves a heavy personal price. However, it was the absolute recognition that it is the right path for the future of Israel that guided me. Israeli society is undergoing a difficult crisis as a result of the disengagement and now needs to heal the rifts.

Now it is the Palestinians' turn to prove their desire for peace. The end of Israeli control over and responsibility for the Gaza Strip allows the Palestinians, if they so wish, to develop their economy and build a peace-seeking society, which is developed, free, law-abiding and transparent, and which adheres to democratic principles. The most important test the Palestinian leadership will face is in fulfilling its commitment to put an end to terror and the infrastructure of terror, eliminate the anarchic regime of armed gangs and cease the incitement and indoctrination of hatred towards Israel and Jews.

Until they do so, Israel will know how to defend itself from the horrors of terrorism. This is why we built the security fence, and we shall continue to build it until it is completed, as would any other country defending its citizens.

The security fence prevents terrorists and murderers from arriving in city centres on a daily basis and targeting citizens on their way to work, children on their way to school and families sitting together in restaurants. This fence is indispensable. This fence saves lives.

Successful implementation of the disengagement plan opens a window of opportunity for advancing towards peace, in accordance with the sequence of the road map. The State of Israel is committed to the road map and to the implementation of the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings. And I hope that it will be possible, through them, to renew the political process.

I am among those who believe that it is possible to reach a fair compromise and coexistence in good neighbourly relations between Jews and Arabs. However, I must emphasize one fact: there will be no compromise on the right of the State of Israel to exist as a Jewish State, with defensible borders, in full security and without threats and terror.

I call on the Palestinian leadership to show determination and leadership and to eliminate terror, violence and the culture of hatred from our relations. I am certain that it is in our power to present our peoples with a new and promising horizon, a horizon of hope.

As I mentioned, the Jewish people have a long memory. We remember events that took place thousands of years ago, and certainly remember events that took place in this Hall during the past 60 years. The Jewish people remember the dramatic vote in the General Assembly on 29 November 1947, when representatives of the Member States recognized our right to national revival in our historic homeland. However, we also remember dozens of harsh and unjust decisions made by the United Nations over the years. And we know that, even today, there are those who sit here as representatives of a country whose leadership calls for Israel to be wiped off the face of the earth, and no one speaks out.

The attempts of that country to arm itself with nuclear weapons must disturb the sleep of anyone who desires peace and stability in the Middle East and the entire world. The combination of murky fundamentalism and support of terrorist organizations

creates a serious threat that every Member State in the United Nations must stand against.

I hope that the comprehensive reforms which the United Nations is undergoing in its sixtieth anniversary year will include a fundamental change and improvement in the approach of the United Nations, its organizations and institutions towards the State of Israel.

Peace is a supreme value in the Jewish legacy and is the desired goal of our policy. After the long journey of wandering and the hardships of the Jewish people; after the Holocaust which obliterated one third of our people; after the long and arduous struggle for revival; after more than 57 consecutive years of war and terror that did not stop the development of the State of Israel; after all this, our heart's desire was and remains to achieve peace with our neighbours. Our desire for peace is strong enough to ensure that we shall achieve it, but only if our neighbours are genuine partners in this longed-for goal. If we succeed in working together, we can transform our plot of land, which is dear to both peoples, from a land of contention to a land of peace for our children and grandchildren.

In a few days on the Hebrew calendar, the new year will begin: the 5,766th year since the creation. According to Jewish belief, the fates of people and nations are determined at the new year by the Creator — to be spared or to be doomed. May the Holy One, blessed be He, determine that this year, our fate and the fate of our neighbours is peace, mutual respect and good neighbourly relations.

From this distinguished podium, on behalf of the people of Israel, I wish all the people of the world a happy New Year.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Cellou Dalein Diallo, Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea.

Mr. Diallo (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of His Excellency General Lansana Conté, President of the Republic of Guinea, I would like first and foremost to express the compassion of the Government and the people of Guinea to President Bush and the American people for the enormous material losses and lose of life caused by Hurricane Katrina in the southern states of the United States of America.

Five years ago, world leaders adopted here in this room the Millennium Declaration under which they resolutely committed to tackling the immense challenge of poverty. In adhering to this important declaration, the Republic of Guinea resolutely committed to attaining the Millennium Development Goals. It is within this framework that in 2002 Guinea prepared in 2002, together with the support of its development partners, namely the World Bank, a national poverty reduction strategy based on the acceleration of economic growth, equitable access to basic social services and the improvement of governance. There was a real possibility that this strategy would succeed given that Guinea laid throughout the 1990s the groundwork for sustainable development.

Indeed, during that decade, despite an unfavourable context characterized especially by a paucity of resources and a massive influx of refugees from Liberia and Sierra Leone, Guinea recorded considerable macroeconomic performance. The average real growth rate was 4.5 per cent, whereas the rate of inflation was lowered and stabilized at less than 5 per cent. The budget deficit remained less than 5 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). This performance was possible thanks to a vast programme of economic and financial reform undertaken by the Government of General Lansana Conté since the beginning of the Second Republic in 1984. Unfortunately, under the combined effects of persistent regional instability, rebel attacks on the country, a drastic reduction in external financing and the exacerbation of our foreign debt burden, the macroeconomic framework has deteriorated significantly and the momentum for the implementation of the poverty reduction strategy has been lost.

The growth rate has dropped to 1.2 per cent, while the population growth rate has remained at 3 per cent. Life expectancy has stagnated and poverty has increased. Today 49 per cent of Guineans live below the poverty line, as compared to 40 per cent just 10 years ago. That is despite significant investments in the rural development and health sectors, and in particular in the education sector, where, fortunately, the overall school enrolment rate rose from 55 per cent in 2000 to 77 per cent in 2004.

In order to reach the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, the Republic of Guinea will need more

substantial support from the international community, especially through an increase in the volume and quality of assistance and, in particular, through foreign debt relief, which today consumes 56 per cent of our fiscal revenue. As we all know, attaining the Millennium Development Goals will clearly depend largely upon the capacity of beneficiary countries to absorb that aid and upon their will to promote good governance, effectively combat corruption and halt environmental degradation.

In this era of globalization, my delegation remains convinced that threats to international peace and security transcend borders and that they must be confronted in an effective multilateral framework. It is for that reason that Guinea would like to reaffirm its conviction that the role and authority of the General Assembly should be strengthened. We also support measures to revitalize the Secretariat, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

Africa is still poor, and continues to suffer from crises. Its population is suffering from the AIDS pandemic and a host of other poverty-related diseases. The debt burden is crushing hopes for the relaunching of its development. Its human resources, which are indispensable for its economic advancement, are being depleted. In that context, the new international economic consensus that is emerging in the course of our meetings is a source of hope. All that remains is to give concrete expression through decisive action and the honouring of commitments to the political will largely manifested by Member States and the various development partners. That is the message of hope I should like to convey on behalf of General Lansana Conté, President of the Republic of Guinea, who would like to reaffirm Guinea's commitment to work with the United Nations towards larger freedom in order to live in dignity free from want and fear.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Dominique de Villepin, Prime Minister of the French Republic.

Mr. De Villepin (France) (*spoke in French*): The United Nations stands for the best that is in us: our aspiration to peace, justice and the freedom of individuals and peoples. Despite our divisions and our doubts, the time has come to adapt our Organization to the changes in the world in order to strengthen its legitimacy and allow it to fulfil its political potential. Sixty years on, the task remains immense.

For the first time since the Millennium Summit and the Monterrey gathering, we share the same development goal. Let us therefore take up the challenge. Let us be true to our commitments, especially in Africa. That is the reason why France, through the voice of Jacques Chirac, the President of the Republic, has, along with other like-minded countries, proposed new financing mechanisms.

Let us also learn what experience has to teach us, be it in Iraq, in the Middle East, in Côte d'Ivoire, Afghanistan or Haiti, and in all the regional crises that destabilize the world. Where division has led to failure, we must together find new ways forward. Where unity has enabled us to achieve initial success, we must persevere. New principles are needed, such as the responsibility to protect. We also need new instruments, such as the Peacebuilding Commission.

What our peoples require of us first and foremost is security. To combat terrorism we need an Organization that mobilizes the determination and energy of all. France firmly believes that operational cooperation must be stepped up, but that respect for the rule of law and the democratic ideal in action are our best weapons. To combat proliferation, let us stand united and set up stronger verification mechanisms.

Our peoples also require respect — the best guarantee of this being respect for human rights, which are central to our common goal. Yet those basic rights are still threatened on every continent by violence and indifference. We need a new instrument, the Human Rights Council. Achieving equal rights and dignity for all is the goal of our struggle here.

The declaration we are going to adopt here will chart the way forward on all those issues. Let us keep up the momentum. For what is urgently needed in the present circumstances is a radical reform of our institutions. If reform is to have legitimacy, it must respond to the requirements of our times: the unity of the international community, respect for the rules of law and the affirmation of collective responsibility. If it is to be effective, it must ensure better representation in the international community.

The reform of the Security Council must therefore be concluded by the end of the year. The plan put forward by Brazil, Germany, India and Japan

enshrines the rights of each continent, in particular Africa, and strengthens the Council. We must also set up a United Nations environment organization. Lastly, we must establish genuine economic and social governance.

In San Francisco in 1945 the hopes of the world's peoples were borne by a few States. Today in New York all the world's countries have joined together in a desire to act together, because no single State has the means to respond alone to the problems the planet faces. Whatever our power, our culture, our religion or our history, we all share a common ideal: a world of justice and solidarity. We all have a common enemy: cowardice and selfishness.

Here, on American soil, France wishes to express its grief at the misfortune that has befallen Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi. We share the suffering of the American people.

And here in this world forum, France cannot simply stand by and watch the pain of men, women and children the world over, from the Middle East to sub-Saharan Africa, who bear witness to our common humanity but are all too often cast out. It is to their appeal that we must respond. France also knows that globalization, although it awakens hopes, can also bring with it scorn for human values and the treatment of people as merchandise. In the face of that urgent need and pressing situations everywhere, let us rouse our consciences. Let us respond to all those who suffer and who want to believe in us. Faced with the all too frequent images of a divided and broken world, how could we not wish to build together a world that at last has a heart and hands worthy of the expectations of people? Let us then act together, for all our words will be in vain if they are not grounded in solidarity, justice and respect. We will be judged not on what we say but by what we do.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency The Honourable Petrus Compton, Minister for External Affairs, International Trade and Civil Aviation of Saint Lucia.

Mr. Compton (Saint Lucia): At the dawn of a new millennium, the heads of State or Government of our United Nations convened in this very Hall to reaffirm our faith in the Organization and its Charter as indispensable foundations of a more peaceful, prosperous and just world. They resolved to create at the national and global levels an environment conducive to development and the elimination of poverty. In support of that overall objective, a set of priority goals and targets, the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), emerged, which we all pledged would be met by the year 2015. When we ushered in that new millennium, five years ago, we translated the optimism, good will and promise that it bore into a declaration of faith in the organization and in each other. Ours was a statement of hope for the future of mankind.

So how have we fared since then? How much of the promise have we and, in particular, the over one billion of the world's dispossessed, been able to realize? We acknowledge that much has happened since then to change the world and to distract us from the task that we set ourselves. From the deadly terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and others since then, the total devastation of Grenada by Hurricane Ivan, the terrible destruction and loss of life brought on by the Indian Ocean tsunami to the most recent devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina in the southern United States, countries large and small, weak and strong, have had to address various and new kinds of vulnerabilities, so that valuable energy and physical resources have had to be diverted away from activities geared towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

That is not to deny that there has been progress in the achievement of some of the Goals in some countries. Indeed there has been some success in the Caribbean and in other countries, but too much remains to be achieved. Saint Lucia recognizes that the development partnership to which developed and developing countries committed themselves is far from being realized. We are heartened, however, by the initiatives being spearheaded by the G-8 in respect of Africa, and look forward to an early translation of the commitments made into tangible benefits for the long-suffering people of that continent.

At the Millennium Summit Saint Lucia pointed to certain concerns that were contributing to growing despair and cynicism about the future of small island developing States and the role of bodies like the United Nations and the World Trade Organization in the shaping of that future. We say today with great sadness that the reasons for our concerns still persist. We remain concerned that the global community of nations can, at different times and depending upon the forum in

which it convenes, promote philosophies or actions that are sharply contradictory. We remain concerned that within this Hall the nations of the world can promote with much enthusiasm our determination to work towards achieving a world free of hunger, poverty and disease, while at the same time some are adopting positions in other forums that have the effect of increasing the marginalization and destroying the limited opportunities for survival of the small, disadvantaged and weak. We remain concerned that, even today, positions adopted at the World Trade Organization are denying the very weakest among us the opportunity for production and trade of our most important export commodities, undermining all efforts at the achievement of the very Millennium Development Goals that we seek to promote.

In the face of that, how can small and vulnerable banana-producing countries like Saint Lucia and the Commonwealth of Dominica, or small sugar-producing States like Saint Kitts and Nevis, be expected to keep faith, confidence or hope in the declarations that are customarily issued at the end of our summits? Our economies may be small and vulnerable, but our citizens are real people who have the same aspirations as others everywhere for prosperity, security and peace.

Saint Lucia is concerned that the development promise of the Doha round of multilateral trade negotiations is yet to be delivered. Saint Lucia believes that overseas development assistance must continue to play an important role in the development of our economies. In that regard, we urge our development partners to deliver on the promise of increased levels of the assistance that is part of the Monterrey Consensus. We remain convinced, however, that there is greater dignity in the facilitation, promotion and realization of our capacity for trade.

We have it in our power to create a world free from hunger, poverty and disease. We have it in our power to create a world where all its citizens can live in larger freedom. The technology and the material wealth exist to allow us to do so today, more than at any other time in the history of mankind. But we must move beyond mere declarations and resolutions. The truth is that we do not need new declarations. What we really need is the political will to do what we have already resolved to do, and more. Let us therefore rise to the real challenge and mobilize that will. That is the task before us. Saint Lucia stands ready to play its part.

The Co-Chairperson (Sweden): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Vuk Drašković, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia and Montenegro.

Mr. Drašković (Serbia and Montenegro) (*spoke in Serbian; English text furnished by the delegation*): Exhausted by the horrors of the Second World War, mankind welcomed the birth of the United Nations with great joy and hope 60 years ago. Our planet believed in the achievement of the ideals of peace, solidarity and brotherhood among people and nations.

Today accusations are being levelled from various quarters that that hope has perhaps been betrayed. The world has known practically no day of peace for six decades. Local wars have taken the lives of millions of people, and the gulf between the rich and the starving has caused us to doubt the moral foundations of the present day world.

Those facts are incontestable, but what would have happened had the United Nations not existed? No doubt, there would have been much less good and much more evil. It is also undeniable, however, that the future cannot be shaped either by treading the old path or acting in the old way. Secretary-General Kofi Annan has rightfully called for a new course for the United Nations, for swift reform and for words to be translated into action.

Disagreements over the enlargement of the Security Council must not prevent or slow down the changes that are now necessary and possible.

Agreement has been reached that terrorism has to be equally condemned wherever and by whomever and for whatever purposes it is committed and that is encouraging. I believe that that will put an end to the policy of double standards, so that the killers of children and civilians in Beslan, in Kosovo and elsewhere cannot be thought of or treated otherwise than as terrorists.

The fact that the decision of the United Nations to have the richest nations allocate 0.7 per cent of their gross national product as assistance to poor developing countries has not been implemented in the 30 years since it was taken is hard to comprehend. That accounts for an enormous concentration of might on the one side and the lack of it on the other. That gulf is also the cause of many civil and inter-State wars, which, along with ideological and religious fanaticism,

have led to the suffering of millions of people. This is a grim world in which, instead of bread and medicine and development and social funds, weapons are offered as a road to happiness. It is also one in which humanitarian aid packages follow weapons and death.

Serbia and Montenegro fully supports the concept of a new collective security and a ban on the proliferation, production, trade and use of weapons of mass destruction, as well as the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission, a Human Rights Council and natural-disaster-relief and environment-protection funds. Without realizing those and other commitments contained in the draft outcome document of this summit and providing extensive solidarity assistance to poor and developing countries, it will not be possible to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

As it was the largest state in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, Serbia and Montenegro is committed to maintaining the best relations with all those with whom we lived together until very recently, as well as with our other neighbours. The united Europe to which we belong is our goal and our future. Unfortunately, in one part of Serbia — in Kosovo and Metohija — political extremism, often working hand-in-glove with terrorism and demanding, in the form of an ultimatum, the creation of another Albanian State, is a serious obstacle to stability in the entire Balkans.

There is no people in Europe today whose rights are so brutally trampled upon as are the rights of the Serbian people in Kosovo, the province administered by the United Nations since 1999. We demand that the Serbs, Montenegrins and other non-Albanians in Kosovo be allowed to enjoy the rights guaranteed to them by the Charter of the United Nations. We also demand that, in accordance with its Charter and with international law, the United Nations respect the principle that State borders can neither be changed by force nor redesignated. Respect for those principles will open the doors to an agreement on the future human and European status of Kosovo.

The meeting rose at 2.45 p.m.